

**1 6 4 40**

**THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION INSTITUTE OF CULTURE**  
**LIBRARY**

**CALCUTTA**

**OPENS.**

**TEL.**

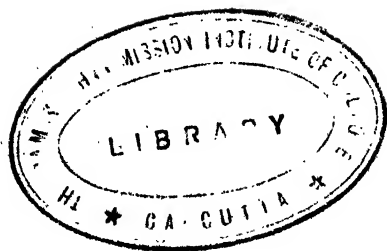
**FINES : One anna per day after the last date below.**

**RENEWALS : By post, telephone or In person. Quote the  
number opposite and last date below.**

--	--	--	--

**P.T.O.**









**Bell's Indian and Colonial Library**

**IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES**

*This Edition is issued for circulation in India and the  
Colonies only.*





Sophia Dorothea  
Wife of George I

# IN THE 'DAYS OF THE GEORGES

BY

WILLIAM B. BOULTON

AUTHOR OF "THE AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON," "SIR JOSHUA  
REYNOLDS," "THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH," ETC., ETC.

JOINT AUTHOR OF  
"MEMORIALS OF THE ROYAL YACHT SQUADRON"



LONDON

GEORGE BELL & SONS

1909

B 663 A

RMIC LIBRARY	
Acc. No.	16440
Clas. No.	942
	1300
Date	
St. Card	
Cuss.	Lee
Cat.	Lee
Bk. C r	✓
Checked	Lee

RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,  
 BREAD STREET HILL, E.C., AND  
 BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

TO  
CECILIA H. CROKER FOX



The author is much indebted to Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. and to Messrs. Macmillan for their courteous permission to print two of the following sketches, 'A Royal Romance,' and 'The Complete Gamester,' which appeared in *The Cornhill Magazine* and *Temple Bar* respectively.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM . . . . .	9
II. THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS . . . . .	85
III. A ROYAL ROMANCE . . . . .	139
IV. A MAID OF HONOUR . . . . .	163
V. THE COMPLETE GAMESTER . . . . .	227
VI. THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL . . . . .	251

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>To face page</i>
SOPHIA DOROTHEA . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
FREDERICK, PRINCE OF WALES . . . . .	42
QUEEN CAROLINE AS PRINCESS OF WALES . . . . .	70
MRS. AXFORD . . . . .	102
From a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds. ( <i>By permission of Henry Graves &amp; Co.</i> )	
GEORGE III. . . . .	130
LADY SARAH LENNOX WITH LADY SUSAN STRANGWAYS AND CHARLES JAMES FOX . . . . .	150
From a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds. ( <i>By permission of Henry Graves &amp; Co.</i> )	
ELIZABETH CHUDLEIGH, COUNTESS OF BRISTOL . . . . .	174
CAPTAIN AUGUSTUS JOHN HERVEY, THIRD EARL OF BRISTOL . . . . .	206
"FARO" . . . . .	242
From the drawing by T. Rowlandson.	
GEORGE BRYAN BRUMMELL . . . . .	262
GEORGE, PRINCE OF WALES . . . . .	288
From a painting by Cosway.	

I

A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM



## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

It is a hard fate, surely, whatever the balance of good and evil in a man's character, that his reputation should depend upon the reports of his enemies; harder than ordinary, perhaps, when he is a prince and a link in the direct succession of one of the great royal houses of Europe. Such a fate, none the less, befell Frederick Prince of Wales, the son of King George the Second of England, who, when he came to die untimely, left hardly a soul to mourn him, except the boy prince who succeeded him, who, we read, "cried extremely." Such virtues as Frederick possessed were left unnoted; his faults, which were undoubtedly many, were written at length by his foes. Here is what the biographer upon whom we are forced chiefly to rely says of Frederick Prince of Wales—

"Had he had one grain of merit at the bottom of his heart, one should have had compassion for him in the situation to which his miserable poor head soon reduced him, for his case, in short, was this: He had a father that abhorred him; a mother that despised him; sisters that betrayed him; a

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

brother set up against him, and a set of servants that neglected him."

This man, then, was poor in most that makes life worth the living, and a little charity in the recital of his faults from those who set down the record of his life might have brought some posthumous redress, if only to his memory. That, too, failed him. Lord Hervey, whom we have quoted above, and Horace Walpole, whose bitter *Memoirs* and *Reminiscences* complete the story of Frederick's life, were both his sworn foes; the first for private as well as political reasons; the last because Frederick, as heir-apparent, was the very head and front of the opposition to Horace's father, Sir Robert Walpole, George the Second's great minister. So Frederick's career makes but a poor show in the writings of those historians. As for the Prince's memory, for most people it survives to-day only in the lines of the bitterest epitaph of an age much given to bitter exercises of that kind. When, in 1751, Frederick fell back into the arms of his valet at Carlton House, the streets of London were, within a few hours, ringing with those dreadful lines with which the Jacobite enemies of his family commemorated his death, and which preserve for many of us our single memory of the hapless Prince—

"Here lies Fred,  
Who was alive, and who's dead,  
I had much rather  
It had been his father;

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

Had it been his brother,  
Still better than another;  
Had it been his sister,  
No one would have missed her;  
Had it been the whole generation,  
Still better for the nation;  
But as its only Fred,  
Who was alive, and who's dead,  
There's no more to be said."

It is now nearly two centuries since those lines were written, and perhaps, at this later date, there may be a little more to be said. We can trace Frederick through his forty-four years with some better guidance of recorded fact and written letter than was at the disposal of that scribe of the bitter pen; we can at least consider his faults with a calm judgment, and perhaps with a more charitable outlook than those who occupied themselves with them in his own day.

Frederick Louis was born at Hanover on the 6th of January, 1707, his father George being then only Electoral Prince, his grandfather the Elector George having not yet succeeded Queen Anne in the throne as George the First of these kingdoms. Of Frederick's childhood we know nothing, except that he was the eldest of eight children, but we may hope that he met with some little joy in those early years of his life to make amends for the troubles which came thick enough later. Frederick's father, who became in due time our King George the Second, was only twenty-four at the time of the child's birth, and



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

it is pleasant to think, as we say, that his appearance increased the domestic harmony which at present prevailed in the Prince's modest establishment at Herrenhausen, that old cradle of the Brunswicks just outside Hanover city, where Frederick's father and grandfather lived together in the old German fashion, and, each in his own way, took their pleasure. No one need grudge Frederick any happy recollections of his childhood at Herrenhausen as some compensation for the chagrins of his youth and manhood.

Vanity seems to have been the ruling trait in the character of Frederick's father, George. He was a small man, fond of his little figure, proud of his shapely leg, which he was later careful to display with the Garter on it, and exulting, perhaps, rather in the show than in the reality, proud of his intrigues with this or that German lady. He was known as Dapper George among those who were highly placed enough to make fun of princes; his brother-in-law Frederic Wilhelm of Prussia, indeed, used to speak of him as the Buffoon, a pleasantry to which George retaliated by calling that monarch the Arch Beadle of the Holy Roman Empire, which was a retort not lacking in point to the knowing ones of those days. But, with all his weaknesses, George had many good qualities. He told the truth, and he was brave. Only a year after Frederick's birth he joined the army of the Allies under the great Marlborough, and distinguished himself mightily

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

at Oudenarde, where he led a cavalry charge, was unhorsed, and more than once in deadly peril. Years later, again, at Dettingen, when his horse bolted and nearly carried him into the enemy's lines, he dismounted, with the remark that on foot he knew he should not run away, put himself at the head of an infantry regiment, waved his sword and threw himself into the postures of a fencing master, led them into action, and set an example for the bravest captain in the army. He would always bring out his old Oudenarde coat in later years for his birthday, and his people laughed at his harmless vanity, but cheered when they saw it at public festivals, for bravery is always in fashion.

Frederick's mother was the brilliant Caroline of Anspach, one of the most beautiful, and certainly the most capable, of the royal ladies of those days. No Englishman can speak of Queen Caroline of England without respect; the greatness of modern England is largely due to the sagacity and steadfastness of that Queen, and to her wise use of the almost unlimited power which the character of the King placed in her hands. Caroline was daughter of the Margrave of Brandenburg Anspach, and her mother having been left a widow when little Caroline was four years old, the child was taken to the court of the Duke of Saxony, whom her mother married as second husband. There were many doings at that irregular court at Dresden which were unsuited to Caroline's tender years, and for her, at least, it

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

was a good thing that the Duke was shortly called to his fathers, and that she passed while still quite young into the keeping of her guardian, the Elector of Brandenburg, afterwards Frederic the First of Prussia, and went to live at his court in Berlin.

At Berlin the little Princess Caroline became a favourite with all who knew her, and among her most devoted friends was her guardian's wife, the Electress Sophia Charlotte, a lady of unusual intellectual gifts, the friend and protector of many of the scientific and philosophical bigwigs of her times, including the erudite Leibnitz, who was often at the court, and the advantage of whose teaching the young girl shared with the Electress. The old Electress Sophia of Hanover was also very fond of the brilliant young princess, and both those great ladies were pleased to say that Berlin and Hanover were "a desert without her." The old Electress, indeed, quite early formed plans for Caroline's betrothal to her grandson Dapper George, and that in spite of a great matrimonial project which had been on foot since 1698 and was to unite her to the Archduke Charles of Austria, later Charles the Sixth, Emperor of Austria, and titular King of Spain. By the year 1704 this project was so seriously in train that Caroline's conversion to the Catholic faith was thought necessary, and a Jesuit father was told off to undertake that salutary office. The good father, however, found his task a hard one. [The

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

Princess refused absolutely to accept his dogmas without discussion, disputed with his reverence in a most independent manner, and was ever prepared with awkward questions which he found it most difficult to answer. It is said that after each interview with the Jesuit she would seek counsel with the Electress Sophia and Herr Leibnitz, who both encouraged her in her unaccommodating attitude towards the priest. In any case, Caroline refused to accept his conclusions altogether, and herself declined further negotiations for the marriage in a letter she wrote to the Archduke's envoy, the Elector Palatine. There was much shaking of heads among the great Catholic families at this failure to snatch the brand from the burning, and a corresponding elation among those of the Reformed Church. "Providence kept a reward in store for such an exalted virtue," said Mr. Addison, and "her pious firmness," as Bishop Burnett remarked, "was not to go unrequited even in this life." The reward and requital came, it may be supposed, when this gifted lady was married to Dapper George in September of 1705. To some it may seem that the blessing to the Princess was a good deal disguised, but there is no doubt as to George's good fortune; and the union was none the less a blessing to the kingdom which in due time Queen Caroline came to rule. Dapper George, despite his bravery, went through life mainly as a figure of fun whom people failed to take quite seriously. He, to be sure, thought him-

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

self a great statesman, and was prevented by his vanity from realizing that his clever wife and her great minister ruled the country by a dexterous manipulation of that very quality. So he continued his struttings and caperings, to the amusement of all Europe, made his courtiers laugh when he kicked his wig round the room at St. James's in his tantrums, really believed that he had the destinies of half Europe in his hands, while his watchful Queen kept him free from those continental entanglements which were the dread of his English subjects, and allowed Walpole to give England that long period of profound peace which it so much wanted, and which laid the first foundations of its later greatness.

To this pair, then, was born Frederick, and one cannot doubt that his arrival was an occasion of rejoicing to that strangely assorted couple. Dapper George was undoubtedly very fond of his brilliant wife, then and afterwards, though his fondness showed itself in some amazing ways. But at this early period he had not developed that propensity of his later years for irregular connections with improper ladies, and Caroline, poor lady, was devoted to her vain little prince to the day of her death. One likes to think, therefore, of some domestic peace in George's establishment at Herrenhausen during those early days of his married life; there was strife enough going on under the same roof at the time, which was to be repeated in his own family only a few years later.

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

Many competent judges are of opinion that the shortcomings of Frederick's career, which are admitted on all hands, are to be explained by that unfortunate contention between father and son which was already a tradition of his family, and continued for two generations after his death. The first Elector of Hanover, Ernest Augustus, seems to have got on very well with his son, our first George, but the history of the four English Georges and their offspring is that of a house divided against itself. That disastrous feud absolutely extinguished any prospect of domestic happiness in the royal family of England for well over a hundred years, and was, perhaps, in its worst phase during Frederick's own manhood. A calm consideration of all the facts seems to suggest that Frederick, his many follies notwithstanding, was that feud's chief victim. In any case, to form any valid estimate of his career, it is necessary to examine, however briefly, the origin of that sombre tradition.

This royal feud had already borne its bitter fruit in the relations which existed between Dapper George and his father at the time of Frederick's birth. No one has ever satisfactorily explained the causes of the beginning of the strife, but the two Georges were already upon the worst of terms. Some say it was a hereditary jealousy on the part of the father of the son who must succeed him; others that it was the son's open espousal of his mother's cause in the tragic matrimonial

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

difference which existed between the elder George and his wife. If that latter reason be the true one, it must certainly be counted for righteousness to the son.

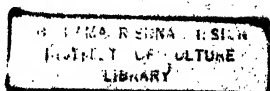
There are few sadder stories in European history than that of George the First and his wife Sophia Dorothea of Zell. George, in the year 1682, at the age of twenty-two, had married the beautiful Sophia Dorothea, daughter of the Duke of Zell, and this lady had already borne him two children, Dapper George, and Sophia, afterwards Queen of Prussia, when the domestic peace of the establishment at Herrenhausen, where the young couple lived with the Elector Ernest, became much disturbed by a variety of causes. First among these was undoubtedly the irregular life at the Electoral court, where existed a state of things which was exceedingly galling to the young Electoral Princess, who was a young lady of more than average parts, and was gifted with an exceedingly sharp tongue, which she was accustomed to exercise with great freedom. Among the objects of her derision, which she made no attempt to keep to herself, was an elderly favourite of the Elector Ernest, a certain Countess Platen, of whom Sophia Dorothea was wont to make unmerciful fun, and whose rancorous enmity she consequently incurred. The Princess was already on bad terms with her husband George, whose taciturn character and rather boorish habits were utterly distasteful to the sprightly young girl, and who had

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

already added matrimonial infidelity, and, it is said, personal violence, to the grievances she had against him. There suddenly appeared at this inharmonious court of Hanover another disturbing element in the person of a certain Count Philip Konigsmark, an adventurer of good family, who, after wandering about Europe in evil courses of all sorts, had got a place at that court as Colonel of the Electoral Guards, and was perhaps the most accomplished and graceless scamp of his times. Sophia had known this Konigsmark as a child; they had, in fact, been playmates together at her father's court at Zell, and there is no doubt that she welcomed the appearance of the handsome Konigsmark at Herrenhausen, and took a natural pleasure in his company, as affording some relief from the dreary surroundings in which she found herself at Hanover. She was, doubtless, indiscreet, and lent too willing an ear to the fascinating colonel, but of anything further than indiscretion there has never been the slightest reliable evidence. It is obvious, however, that the arrival of Konigsmark at Herrenhausen, in the circumstances then prevailing, completed all the elements necessary for a tragedy, and that tragedy followed surely enough.

Konigsmark, who was a hopeless villain, as his career already proved, was well known in England, where he had been concerned with his brother in that atrocious murder of Mr. Thomas Thynne in Pall Mall—"Tom of Ten Thousand,"

2116440.





## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

whose fate may still be seen carved in stone on his tomb in Westminster Abbey—and it was a thousand pities that a halter was not fitted to the Count's handsome neck on that occasion. At Hanover he swaggered and posed as a rich man, dressed finely and in good taste, was witty, satirical, gay and amusing. He seems to have made a sort of love to the old Countess Platen and her daughter, or perhaps allowed them to make love to him. At any rate, he went about bragging of his successes with those ladies, and in his cups was accustomed warmly to espouse the cause of the Electoral Princess against her husband. There are never wanting busybodies to report this sort of vapourings in the quarters where they are likely to do the most harm, and it was not long before the Platen heard of Konigsmark's indecent boastings, and of the part he had taken in Sophia's matrimonial differences with Prince George. She at once set herself to gratify the hatred she bore to both these young people by devising a scheme for their undoing.

Volumes have been written upon the history of this unfortunate Princess Sophia, in which partisans of herself and of her husband have stated the case for each with the fulness and acrimony usual in such disputes; but no one has proved the guiltiness of her relations with Konigsmark, though the archives of half the courts of Europe have been ransacked with that purpose, and a consideration of the evidence now available points certainly to

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

great indiscretion on her part, but to nothing more. That indiscretion, however, made the Platen's task of compromising her an easy one. That wicked painted old harridan seized her first opportunity of making mischief when she saw Konigsmark take the baby George from his young mother's arms in the garden at Herrenhausen, and carry the child to the Princess's apartments; that lady's husband was away, but the Platen posted off hot-foot to Elector Ernest, reported the incident, and thus succeeded in creating an atmosphere of suspicion about the relations of Konigsmark and the Princess. The Elector, it is said, was not inclined to make any fuss, but gave it as his opinion that in relieving the tired Sophia of the child, Konigsmark had paid her "an insolent attention." Later on, upon the return of Prince George, the Platen contrived that a glove of Sophia's should be dropped in a pavilion in the garden which Konigsmark was known to have just quitted, and found by her husband, and the point was emphasized by the Platen sending a messenger, as if from the Princess, for its recovery. She then turned her attention to the Prince himself, used all her wiles to get him to accept her sister, Mme. von Busche, as his favourite, and failing in that scheme, introduced Melusina Schulemburg to him, and had the satisfaction of seeing that lady installed in that position at a public festival which she gave in honour of her sister's wedding. Outraged at this indignity, the

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

poor Princess Sophia fled to her father's court at Zell, but the Duke could give her no help, and she was forced to return to Hanover. Here there is no doubt she poured her woes into the sympathetic ear of Konigsmark, as the only person about that dismal court in whom she could confide. They met often, but never alone, so far as has been proved, and she undoubtedly invoked his aid in attempting to escape from surroundings which she found intolerable. Her enemies said that she proposed to accompany him upon a visit he was about to make to Paris; it seems more certain, however, that the scheme in which she asked his assistance was to help her to escape to the court of her cousin the Duke of Wolfenbittel. But their goings and comings were watched by the Platen, who seized the opportunity of a second absence of Prince George for a plot of a fiendish cunning and ferocity. She sent a note to Konigsmark, signed with the forged signature of the Princess, requesting him to attend Sophia at her apartment. Konigsmark, nothing loth, perhaps, obeyed the summons, and found Sophia attended by her maid of honour, Mlle. Knesebeck, who was present throughout the interview which followed. His appearance, however, in the Princess's apartments was sufficient for the purposes of the Platen, and as soon as her agents had seen Konigsmark within the doors of the palace, she herself hurried off to the Elector, reported the fact, and procured from him an order for Konigsmark's arrest. \* She then

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

went to the palace guard, showed the order, bribed the halberdiers both with wine and gold, and instructed them to arrest the Count alive or dead. The guard concealed themselves behind a high stove in the Hall of Knights, which Konigsmark must cross in leaving the Princess's rooms. He was seized from behind as he passed the stove, and struck down with a halberd as he drew his sword to defend himself. As he fell he cried, "Spare the innocent Princess," and it is said that the Platen appeared at the cry, and crushed with her heel the lips of the dying man as he cursed her with his last breath. The paving of the palace floor was taken up, and his body buried in lime near where it fell.

The greatest efforts were made to hush up this awful tragedy in which, of course, the Electoral Prince had no hand, but in vain. George was quite prepared to let matters rest and to resume his relation of husband with the Princess, but to no purpose. She refused all offers of compromise by declaring that if she was guilty she was unworthy of the Prince, if innocent, he was unworthy of her. This attitude and its consequences seem to raise a very strong presumption of her innocence. George was forced to bring a suit of divorce against his wife, and summoned a consistory court for that purpose. In the pleadings before this court no charge of adultery was brought against Sophia, and the decree which was pronounced against her on the 28th of December, 1694, divorced her from

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

her husband upon the ground of desertion. Upon the execution of this sentence she took an oath upon the Sacrament solemnly protesting her innocence, an oath which she repeated weekly at that sacred office throughout her life. She was removed to the castle of Ahlden, situated in a dreary morass near the banks of a river of that name, where she lived closely guarded for thirty years.

It seems entirely creditable to this poor lady's son, Dapper George, that as he grew up he refused altogether to believe in his mother's guilt. So little was this the case, indeed, that he and his sister, later Queen of Prussia, engaged in a surreptitious correspondence with her, and George, it is said, cherished schemes for her deliverance. He made one effort, at least, to see her. 'As a youth he was hunting in the neighbourhood of her prison, and before any of his suite realized his intention, rode off alone at top speed towards the castle. He had reached the woods of Ahlden, and must soon have been in communication with his mother, when he was overtaken by his guardians, put under arrest, and sent back to Hanover. This feeling of sympathy and pity by the son for a mother he had not seen since his early childhood, however creditable to him, was obviously no recommendation to his father in all the circumstances, and seems to supply the best explanation of the family strife of the Brunswicks which began with the two first Georges, and lasted until George the Fourth saw his daughter, the Princess Caro-

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

line, descend untimely into the grave a full century later.

It must have been a strange household, that at Herrenhausen, two generations of the same family living under the same roof at issue with each other, and the patriarchal Elector and his wife divided in their sympathies between the two. As a rule it would seem that the Elector Ernest sided with his son George; the Electress Sophia was most certainly a partisan of her grandson Dapper George. All these unfortunate differences were intensified rather than soothed by the arrival of Dapper George's bride, the brilliant Princess Caroline of Anspach. One is rather sorry on the whole for the elder George. He was of a silent, inarticulate character, but an able man who in political matters acted straightforwardly and with a wise caution, and a fair estimate of his whole career will accept him as a reliable, honest prince. He had his private faults, of course, but they were those of his house and of his times, and he cannot be said to have had the best of luck with his womenkind. Whatever the merits or demerits of his wife's affair with Konigsmark, his treatment of that hapless lady, up to a point at least, was justified by the usage of his rank and hers. Princesses are not permitted the liberties which are allowed to ladies of lower station, and the appearance which her conduct bore to the world after the death of Konigsmark, as well as her refusal of all compromise, made a separation inevitable.

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

After that separation George was content to amuse himself with those appanages of the court which were an accepted part of the Electoral establishment, of whom the harridan Platen, his father's favourite, was a type. England later was familiar with two of those ladies, Melusina Schulemberg, and the Countess Kielmansegge; its peerage, in fact, was adorned by both, under the titles of Duchess of Kendal and Countess of Darlington respectively. George, at Hanover, was quite content with the society of these ladies, and wished only to be left undisturbed with them, with his beer and tobacco, of which he was inordinately fond, and to the rather drowsy and slow-going life which he loved.

Suddenly into this establishment comes the brilliant Caroline, devoted to her husband, Dapper George, espousing his side of the paternal feud with the greatest spirit, and prepared on every occasion to make all sorts of fun at her father-in-law, his ugly mistresses, his beer-drinking and his tobacco-smoking; his taciturnity all the while helpless against her sallies. His own mother, too, the old Electress Sophia, a lady of the very greatest importance as a granddaughter of James the First of England, through whom his house was presently to be exalted to the British throne, was already more than partial to his sharp-tongued daughter-in-law. We have seen that she inspired the young lady to reject suitors like the Kaiser of Austria, and had reserved her for her own grandson, the

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

Dapper one. One cannot doubt which side the Electress took in those distressful family quarrels. One may imagine, then, with great probability, that George had but a poor time of it between these royal ladies, and that that was a genuine cry of anguish which came from his taciturn soul when he spoke of his daughter-in-law as "*cette diablesse Madame la Princesse.*"

To Dapper George and his Princess in such surroundings came little Frederick in 1707, and it is more than probable that his early memories were identified with this atmosphere of domestic strife, which was destined to bear fruit of the same kind in his relations with his own parents in years to come. But at this moment the little flaxen-haired Fred was a personage of the highest consideration, as a link in the chain of direct descent of his family, a family which at length was clearly destined to greater things than at one time seemed probable. Poor Queen Anne's endless maternal troubles had all proved in vain when her little son the Duke of York died at eleven years of age in 1700, and the English people had decided by a solemn instrument that she should be succeeded in the throne by the Electoral family of Hanover, in virtue of their descent from James the First through the old Electress Sophia. These prospects gave a distinct increase of consideration to the Brunswicks among the German courts of their neighbours, and, indeed, throughout Europe. Hanover was only one among those numerous German



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

states and principalities whose chief importance in an international aspect lay in their possession of a vote in the election of the Kaiser of the Reich. Hanover had not yet attained to the dignity of a kingdom, like Prussia, Bavaria, or Saxony. The act of settlement, therefore, which ensured the throne of the powerful and, above all, rich, nation of England to the Electoral family of one of the less important German states added much to its dignity. That dignity was not lessened by the fact that it was reasonably secure. There were three generations of Brunswicks alive when Frederick was born, the eldest, his grandfather, being little past his prime, and the addition of Frederick to the line of his fathers was hailed by all parties interested as a very auspicious event. It is well to remember little Frederick's exact value in the Brunswick succession, in view of the scant consideration he received from his own parents in later years. 16440.

That want of consideration showed itself first, perhaps, when, upon the death of Queen Anne, and the accession of George the First to the throne, Frederick's father and mother followed the King to England, and left the boy of seven to the care of his nurses at Hanover. There were, doubtless, reasons for leaving themselves unencumbered upon their first arrival in this country. But it seems a little harsh and unnatural to have allowed their eldest son to grow to manhood without setting eyes upon him after his seventh year : neither

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

George nor Caroline again met Frederick until he came over to England as Prince of Wales after his father's accession. Meanwhile, the feud between George Prince of Wales, and his father the King broadened and deepened. Their relations had been going from bad to worse during the last years at Hanover; George the elder had been reasonably perturbed by a feminine intrigue of the old Electress, who proposed to the Whig party in this country that the hopeful son, who had already been created Duke of Cambridge in the House of Peers, should visit Queen Anne and publicly take his seat in that house; that the English people, in fact, should have the first glimpse of their future rulers in the person of the Dapper George with the fine leg and whatever graces youth could lend to his little person, before his silent and unattractive parent had ever appeared before his prospective subjects at a public function of any kind. The Elector, as well as Queen Anne, forbade the proposal, and it was promptly abandoned.

The unfortunate strife between these two Georges was, of course, common knowledge in Hanover, and the elder had not occupied the throne a twelvemonth before their relations were conspicuous to the whole of England as well. There was first of all a contest as to the allowance of the Prince, now a personage of great importance, with an amazingly clever wife, who had already presented an appreciative nation with an

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

heir to the throne, and so relieved it of any anxiety as to questions of the succession, always troublesome, and generally dangerous, as England and Europe knew to their cost. Although the Prince was kept under the royal eye, so to speak, by reason of the old Hanoverian arrangement by which the young couple dwelt under the same roof with his Majesty at St. James's, he still managed to attract what the King thought an undue share of attention. His Majesty would have wished to have the matter of the Prince's allowance left in his own hands, as a means of keeping some little control over the doings of his son and daughter-in-law; and the Whig party, as in duty bound, were quite prepared to see eye to eye with his Majesty in that affair. But his Majesty was soon to learn the blessings of a parliamentary system which prevailed in a country of which he was constitutional monarch, and of which the body pleasantly known as "His Majesty's Opposition" is an important element. These gentlemen, being of the Tory complexion, quite naturally sympathized with the heir-apparent in the matter of pocket-money, with the result that that royal gentleman was voted the comfortable sum of £100,000 per annum.

Then the King, with the cares of Hanover still upon his shoulders, went back to that country in the first year of his English reign, and unguardedly appointed the Prince regent during his absence. This brought the Regent much in the public eye,

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

who was, naturally enough, happy to make the most of his opportunity. Dapper George made great strides in public favour; we read, displayed his little figure to the best advantage on all public occasions, and strutted and played Prince Charming to admiration. His Princess, too, with parts immeasurably superior to those of her vain little husband, was fully endowed with the graces and charm which belong to her sex and station, and became hugely popular with the good British public. The poor King in Hanover was almost forgotten, and came back quite sore at the place he found occupied by his son, who during his father's absence received all the credit for the settlement of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715. There followed suspicion and hostility on both sides, every matter of ceremonial and etiquette was an occasion for the display of ill feeling. Behind each of the men was his womenkind, whose influence was not exerted in the cause of peace, we may be sure. King George had brought with him from Hanover the ladies Schulenberg and Kielmansegge, upon whom, in the fashion of those times, he had bestowed comfortable pensions and sinecure offices upon this or that establishment, and who presided over his household, and were his chief companions and confidantes. So complete, indeed, was their reign in his domestic affairs that between them they shared the whole of the personal jewels left by Queen Anne; and Queen Caroline, when she came to the throne with her

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

husband a few years later, found only a single necklace, of no great value, of which to take possession.

Opposed to this establishment, and under the same roof, was that of the Prince with the witty, sharp-tongued Princess at its head, and it is easy to imagine the friction between the two households that followed. It is true that the Prince was shortly to develop a reputation for gallantry beside which his royal father's *fredaines* were pale and ineffectual. He was, indeed, already making eyes at this or that lady of his wife's little court, the charming Mary Bellenden, for instance, who sent him about his business in double-quick time, or Mrs. Howard, who suffered him more gladly. But at present there was the appearance of decorum, at least, in his domestic arrangements, which made his wife's attitude towards those of the King intelligible, if not altogether justifiable. In any case, there was a state of affairs at St. James's between the silent King with his stolid companions on the one hand, and the Prince and "cette diablesse Madame la Princesse" on the other, which was clearly intolerable. When one remembers, also, that the Prince had a real grievance against the King, in the suppression of the Electress Sophia's will by the elder George, a will in which he believed himself to have been handsomely remembered, there is little wonder that the relation of the two came to open rupture at last. George and his Princess, in fact, were

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

told plainly to go, and St. James's knew them no more, to their own and King George's inexpressible relief, no doubt. So the younger George removed the Princess and her ladies and his dapper self to Leicester House in Leicester Fields, where he kept a little court of his own—Leicester House, which stood near the corner of Cranbrook Street in Leicester Square, and was called the "pouting-place for princes," because, as we shall see later, Frederick came to the same place in the same dudgeon when he had quarrelled with his royal father.

These royal bickerings, patent enough to the public already by the removal of the Prince from St. James's, were destined, three years later, to reach a point of acerbity which set all the courts of Europe laughing. Princess Caroline lay by in 1717, and there was a function at the christening of her little son which necessitated the meeting of the opposed courts at Leicester House. Prince George had views of his own as to the godfathers for his little son, and wished his uncle, the Bishop of Osnaburgh, to be one, as a personage of a suitable eminence for so important an occasion. That wish, in the circumstances, was quite sufficient for the King to decide otherwise. So he cast about him and selected the Duke of Newcastle, a young nobleman of twenty-eight, and of great consideration in point of family and influence, it is true, but not the sort of godfather that the Prince desired for his child. So George

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

decided to protest, and he made his protest in very characteristic fashion. The royal party was assembled in the Princess's bedroom for the ceremony, the King and his court, with the godfathers, on one side of the bed, the Prince and the Princess's ladies on the other. No sooner had the Archbishop spoken the last words of the service than Prince George ran round the foot of the bed, shook his fist in the Duke of Newcastle's face under the very nose of the King, and spluttered in a towering passion, "You are a villain, and I shall find you"; meaning in his imperfect English, that he would find a time to be even with him. Never was such a to do; the King ordered the Prince to be put under arrest in his own house, and Lady Suffolk, coming to the Princess's bedchamber next morning, had a halberd pointed at her breast by a sentry at the door.

Such was the family strife in which Frederick was born and in which he was reared, that weary tradition which he inherited and from which he suffered. We have done at last with the disputes between the two first Georges, a bare recital of which was necessary in order to make plain the difficulties with which Frederick himself had to contend in later years. That there has been no exaggeration of these differences by the numerous gossiping writers who have reported them seems clear, if only from the fact that when the second George came to the throne his wife, looking

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

through her father-in-law's private papers, found among them a proposal in black and white from Berkley, the Lord of the Admiralty, that the Prince should be spirited away to the plantations and never heard of again. George the First was too humane a man to entertain such a proposal, but the paper remained as a witness to the aspect in which the royal discord was regarded by others, and as a standing accusation against Berkley, who naturally received scant favour when the Prince came to the throne.

Frederick all this time was growing up with his governors at Herrenhausen, a light-haired, rather weak sort of youth by all accounts, totally neglected by his parents, as it would seem. Details of his early youth are quite lacking, but there is little doubt that as he grew up he began to try to improve upon the example set him by his forebears, and that he ran through the gamut of such forbidden pleasures as Hanover and his opportunities of evading his governors and tutors afforded. In any case, he is reported as leading "an extremely dissolute life." Small as was the consideration bestowed by George and Caroline upon Frederick's upbringing, they were none the less fully conscious of the place he held in the succession of their family, and Frederick could have been little more than seven years of age when his parents began casting about for a prospective bride for him, and their matrimonial schemes eventually took a very ambitious shape.



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

Little Frederick, indeed, was to be a chief personage in the famous Double Marriage project, which was to unite the two great Protestant houses of Britain and Prussia. (The scheme had been approved in general terms by the heads of both houses since the early days of Dapper George's marriage to Caroline and that of his sister Sophia to Frederic Wilhelm of Prussia. This abstract aspiration was, of course, greatly strengthened by the arrival of heirs in both families. George and Caroline had in due time a son and daughter, Frederick and Amelia; the Prussian royal house was similarly blessed in the persons of Frederic, Crown Prince, and his sister Wilhelmina. With the arrival of this new and complete generation of both houses upon the scene, the rather nebulous idea of the Double Marriage assumed a more defined shape. Frederick of England was to marry little Wilhelmina; Frederic of Prussia his little cousin Amelia of England. The scheme became an accepted thing between the two houses, acquiesced in by the heads of both, and promoted especially by Sophia of Prussia, who from the first had set her heart upon seeing Wilhelmina Queen of England.

Frederick was thus provided with a romance from his earliest childhood, which, as he grew up, he accepted with ardour; he began to fancy himself in love with the little cousin he had never seen, wrote little love-letters to her and made her little presents. Little Wilhelmina, too, according

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

to her own account, accepted the situation with a proper maidenly demureness; took Frederick's little presents along with her dolls and other playthings as a child, and as she grew into girlhood, assumed a sort of indifferent acquiescence in what she considered was a settled destiny. Her mother, however, lost no opportunity of impressing her with the advantages of the match. As Frederick came to manhood, and the reports of his sad doings at Hanover reached the Prussian court, Wilhelmina would listen to such counsel from her mother as this: "He is a prince, that Frederick, who has a good heart, but whose genius is rather small; rather ugly than not, and a little misshapen. But if you can only bring yourself to bear his follies, you will be able to govern him entirely, and when his father dies, you will be more king than he. You will give laws to the nation, and it will be you who will decide on the greater matter of the happiness of Europe."

The matter thus tacitly accepted by both families went but lamely, nevertheless, after George the First came to England as king. In the first place, the prospective brides and bridegrooms were at present in long clothes or short petticoats, and silent and cautious George very plausibly took that incontestable fact as a valid reason for being in no indecent hurry in the matter. Then, again, there was the uncomfortable posture of affairs between himself and Dapper George. Why should he take all kinds of trouble

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

about that son's affairs when the reprobate and his sharp-tongued wife were thwarting his Majesty at every turn, stealing popularity from under his very nose, and making fun of his honest Kendals and Darlingtons? Treaties for the marriage of princes and princesses, moreover, involved all sorts of troublesome arrangements with stingy English parliaments, of which the poor King was learning by bitter experience. Were there not all sorts of murmurings at the provision for his Majesty's own needs; at the modest allowances for the Kendals and Darlingtons? What would such niggard political hucksters find to say if he entered into treaties requiring settlements for the marriages of his grandson and granddaughter, the one playing with his rocking-horse at Herrenhausen, the other squalling in her nurse's arms at St. James's? "Let them wait," he said to every proposal; "the parties were young enough, let them wait." These were surely valid reasons for the cautious George's hesitation in the matter, and we need not search for others, or take much heed of Wilhelmina's very feminine suggestion, which she recorded in those diverting *Memoirs*, written as an elderly lady, from which we draw most of our information, that when Grandpapa George came to the English throne and ruled that great and rich country, he was inclined to look down upon Prussia and its court.

Dapper George and Caroline do not seem to have worried much in the matter, and were content

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

to let it rest; indeed, they were in no position with the King to make any other course effective. But it was quite different with Queen Sophia at Berlin. That restless lady never let an opportunity pass of doing all she could to forward the matter. She preached it into her daughter's ears with such eloquence and constancy that Wilhelmina never doubted the matter was a fixed thing, and at the age of fifteen began to look forward to the possibilities of her future position. When King George came over to Herrenhausen Queen Sophia would go to visit him there from Berlin, button-hole her father and draw him apart to discuss the project. But Papa George was not to be driven. It was a fixed thing, he said, but not to be hurried, and he would turn the subject by taking his daughter to the window and asking her if she did not think the Herrenhausen gardens, with their clipped beech hedges and Leibnitz waterworks, very fine. As a fact, nothing was done during George's life, and when death seized him in his coach on the way to Osnaburgh in 1727, the Double Marriage was hardly less nebulous than when it took a misty shape at Hanover twenty years earlier.

Frederick was now twenty, still living at Hanover, with no other control from his parents than the doling out of the funds which supported his modest retinue; they had not seen him, indeed, for twelve years, and, so far as is known, the young Prince had been mewed up at Herren-

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

hausen and had never left his native place during that period. But at twenty most youths of spirit, in whatever rank of life, find means of escaping from the thralldom of tutors and governors, and Frederick being no exception to the rule, was living his own life at Hanover with no particular credit to himself or his family, a state of things to be deplored, but not wondered at. The projected wedding with Wilhelmina meanwhile began to excite his youthful imagination, and he seems to have worked himself up into as ardent a passion as was possible in the absence of the young lady and his total ignorance of her charms and personality. He found all the help he could hope for from his aunt Queen Sophia at Berlin. Whatever the signs of languor among the other parties to the compact, there was no loosening of purpose on the part of that lady, with whom every sigh of the love-lorn Frederick found a sympathetic echo. There was even a confidential correspondence between the two, in which it is said that Frederick proposed to rush off privately to Berlin, marry his Wilhelmina secretly offhand, and leave the potentates of both families to adjust matters afterwards as they could. Some colour was given to the rumour by the sudden imprisonment of one of Frederick's emissaries in that city for some unknown offence which was never made public, but there was no truth in it. Frederick, however, undoubtedly wrote in very ardent fashion to his aunt Sophia, who very thoughtfully burned his



Frederick Prince of Wales



## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

letters as soon as read, and she displayed the greatest anxiety to see him at the Prussian court as the accepted lover of her Wilhelmina.

The visit of the King of Saxony to Berlin in May of 1728 seemed to promise a great opportunity for that auspicious event, and it would appear that Queen Sophia and Frederick had some understanding on the subject, for Wilhelmina says, not without a touch of humour, that during the preparations for the festival her mother "took every ass and mule for his Royal Highness." Dubourgay, the English Minister in Berlin, faithfully reported every rumour to the like effect, which may have had the result of preventing the visit. In any case it never took place, and Frederick himself was removed from the danger zone by being ordered to join his parents in England. He arrived at St. James's in February of 1729 after a journey which was kept almost a secret, and his marriage with Wilhelmina was as far off as ever.

It is true that things looked more prosperous in the following year, when an English envoy, Sir Charles Hotham, went over to Berlin with the idea of coming to some arrangement on the whole subject of the Double Marriage. Frederick now was more impatient than ever for the match, could not contain his ardour, in fact, and wrote very pressing letters to Sir Charles: "I conjure you, my dear Hotham," said he, "to get these negotiations finished; I am madly in love (*amoureux comme un*



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

*you*), and my impatience is unequalled." Wilhelmina thought these sentiments very romantic from a young man who had never seen her, and was inclined to make fun of him and his vows, or at least said she was, when later she came to write an account of that tender passage. But most of her people thought the matter settled. There were daily conferences between Frederic Wilhelm and Hotham, and after one of these the King commanded that gentleman and the British ambassador to stay to dinner at Potsdam palace, where, as the former records, they all got immoderately drunk. The King, thinking the matter as good as arranged, could not conceal his joy, filled his glass, and drank to Wilhelmina, Princess of Wales. The very servants pricked up their ears at this, and one of them went off at full gallop with the news to Berlin Schloss, where the Queen was sitting with her ladies. One of these rushed up to Wilhelmina's room with the joyful news. "Is that all?" was that young lady's comment, according to her own account. But the Queen addressed her as Princess of Wales, and her lady in waiting as "my lady," until the sagacious Fraulein Sonsfield suggested it might be as well to wait for such titles until the King had proclaimed the matter settled; very good advice as it turned out, for a grievous hitch had already occurred in the negotiations.

There were several explanations for this unfortunate interruption, but there is little doubt that it originated with Frederick's father at St. James's.

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

In the light of later events, it is quite clear that Dapper George had no particular wish to see Frederick settled, at present, at least; he had a second and favourite son in the Duke of Cumberland for one thing, and the hereditary jealousy of a Brunswick King for a Brunswick Prince of Wales had already begun to operate upon his mind. Then he and his brother-in-law at Berlin had already points of difference: they had long ago been exchanging abusive nicknames, as we have seen; Frederic Wilhelm, it is said, had never forgiven George for marrying Caroline, whom he wanted for himself, and he was at no pains to conceal his low estimation of her husband's parts. Now that George was King of England the thought of the poor opinion of his ability which prevailed at Berlin was little soothing to his royal dignity, a quality upon which he set great store. Politically, too, Prussia, under Frederic Wilhelm's very able government, was daily becoming of more and more consideration among the nations of Europe, in whose counsels Hanover was almost a negligible quantity. There were endless minor points of difference between the two kings. In the recruiting of his famous regiment of Potsdam Guards, which was Frederic Wilhelm's pet hobby, he was accustomed to ride that hobby roughshod over the feelings, as well as the frontiers, of his neighbours. Hanover, and many another State, had grievous complaints to make at Berlin at regular and frequent intervals about this or that honest subject of

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

theirs who, unhappy in his inches, had been "recruited" for Berlin in circumstances which amounted to kidnapping of the most unblushing kind. One of Frederic's agents once came upon a village carpenter of seven feet and over whom he determined to procure for his master's corps of giants. He ordered from the carpenter a chest exactly seven feet six inches long. The chest was finished and delivered by the artisan. "You have made it too short," said the officer. "No, sir," replied the carpenter, "I myself am seven foot three and I could lie down in it at ease." "I cannot believe it," said the agent, "unless I see you do it." The man lay down in the chest, the agent popped on the lid, screwed it down, put it on a cart, and drove it a few miles over the frontier into Prussia, where he found his "recruit" suffocated for want of air. There were other grievances also between these two masterful brothers-in-law. They had a long-standing dispute as to the ownership of certain meadows lying on the borders of their territories, insignificant in point of size and value, but a very precious bone of contention between the two monarchs, over which they disputed like two angry farmers. As the grass ripened in these meadows one would steal a march on the other by having it cut without notice, put on carts, carried over the border, and made into hay on his own territory. So angry did they get about these measures that Frederic proposed to challenge George to single combat, and was only dissuaded

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

by his ministers, who said, truly enough, that he would make himself the laughing-stock of Europe.

Finally Frederic Wilhelm had a son, the notable youth who in due time became Frederic the Great, and who was, of course, an important figure in the Double Marriage project, but with whom he was on the worst of terms. The youth of Frederic is a part of the history of the world. The discipline that hapless boy received at this time would be past belief were it not recorded in the diplomatic correspondence of every court in Europe. Frederic was knocked down and caned by the paternal hand; the crockery would fly at him at meal-times, urged by the same force; worst of all, he would hear from the royal lips that a lad of any spirit would blow his brains out rather than submit to such treatment. Frederic of Prussia, like Frederick of England, had his romance provided for him by the Double Marriage project, and his cousin Amelia was much in his thoughts during those heavy years. He decided, indeed, to fly to his aunt Caroline to escape from the paternal chastisement, was caught in the act, court-martialled as a deserter, and, it is said, sentenced to death. His companion and helpmate did suffer the penalty. Here, in fine, was a state of things in Prussia between father and son which promised no hymeneal raptures as a solution. Frederic, willing enough for Fred of England to marry Wilhelmina, would hear nothing at present with regard to Fred of Prussia and cousin

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

Amelia. George chose to say "both or none," and to stand by it, and the Double Marriage project was at an end at last. Frederic Wilhelm sealed the matter by at once looking out for a husband for Wilhelmina, and gave her to choose between a convent and certain elderly royal but disreputable bridegrooms whom he indicated. He relented a little, however, and on the 27th of May 1731, Wilhelmina was betrothed, and later married, to a very personable young prince from Baireuth, lived an obscure but not unhappy life at that little court, and wrote her *Memoirs* in her later days which were published in French in 1811, and are very excellent reading.

We have gone forward a little to attend the obsequies of poor Frederick's romance, and must return two years to watch his arrival in England and his establishment in leading-strings at St. James's. We probably know as much of the Prince up to the age of two-and-twenty to-day as any one in England at that time, including even his own parents. One or two English travellers had seen him at Herrenhausen. Lord Hervey, his enemy of later years, when making the grand tour, paid his respects to the little Prince of nine, and gave his father, Lord Bristol, "a lively description of the blooming beauties of his person and character," which is in refreshing contrast to anything he wrote of his Prince later. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, too, formed a similarly favourable estimate of the boy about the same time; she thought

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

"our young Prince has all the accomplishments possible at his age, with an air of sprightliness and understanding, and something so very engaging and easy in his behaviour that he needs not the advantage of his rank to appear charming." Those were almost the only panegyrics that were ever written of poor Fred, and we record them, therefore, if only as curiosities.

There was no state or ceremony whatever about the Prince's journey to England, and Frederick came to the country of which he was heir to the throne with as little notice as any private gentleman returning from the grand tour. He seems to have created a favourable impression upon his first appearance; Lady Bristol wrote to her lord at Ickworth, after seeing him, that he was "the most agreeable young man it was possible to imagine," and that she believed "the world never produced a royal family so happy in one another."

Unfortunately, however, these appearances were absolutely at variance with the real facts, and the Prince had not been in this country for three months before he and his father were on the worst of terms.

A great mystery has been made about the origin of this unfortunate dissension, but a consideration of all the evidence now available will make it fairly clear. We have, perhaps, hinted at a primary cause in describing the relations between George the First and George the Second, and that traditional jealousy of the heir-apparent by

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

the reigning king must certainly be taken into account. The King would not hear of Frederick's coming to England until he was forced to send for him. Walpole, in George the First's time, had told that monarch that if Frederick were not brought over during his reign he would never set foot on these shores, and it was only upon the minister's representation to George the Second that there would be a popular tumult and an address from Parliament to the Crown if the Prince's coming were longer delayed, that George at length gave way and sent for him. Horace Walpole and Lord Hervey both wrote very mysteriously of some "disgraceful truths" about the Prince as a cause for ill-feeling between father and son; Lord Chancellor Hardwicke was quoted as telling Sir Robert Walpole "of certain passages between the King and himself, and between the Queen and the Prince, as of too high and secret a nature even to be trusted" to his memoirs. There was much head-shaking about this by Horace and others, who hinted at some enormity committed by the youthful Prince at Hanover. As a matter of fact, there is the strongest reason to believe that the "high and secret" matter mentioned by Lord Hardwicke was the failure of a proposal of George the Second to cut off Frederick from the succession of the English throne; to leave him the petty kingdom of Hanover, in fact, and give his younger brother, the Duke of Cumberland, the English crown. George

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

had broached this precious scheme to the old King in 1725, who would have none of it. Frederick was old enough to judge for himself, he said, and unless he consented to forego his right to the English succession nothing could be done. In the face of these facts it is useless to point to Frederick's life at Hanover as the cause of George's hatred of his son. We must remember that his excesses there were the natural result of his being left alone without a sight of his parents for thirteen years, and whatever his offence, it was a youthful folly at its worst. Moreover, it did not lie in George the Second's mouth to preach sermons of morality and to deliver homilies upon the shortcomings of a son whose upbringing from the age of childhood he had left to tutors and governors. Indeed, there is no reason to believe that he did so, and the mysterious offence of Frederick's youth at which Horace Walpole shook his head was, in fact, the failure of his father's scheme for disinheriting him in favour of his brother William. A better judge than Horace Walpole, and one possessed of later and fuller information, John Wilson Croker, was of that opinion.

Ferderick thus came to England under no very favourable auspices, and it cannot be said that the nature of his reception at court held out much promise of an improvement. He was duly created Prince of Wales in January of 1729, but it proved a somewhat empty title, shorn as it was



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

of much of the dignity of that illustrious position. He was given a suite of rooms at St. James's under the same roof with his parents, which precluded any idea of a real court of his own, and his allowance was fixed by George at the paltry sum of £26,000 a year, and that not as a right, but as a voluntary payment subject to withdrawal at the King's pleasure. Frederick not unnaturally resented this treatment. The King's civil list had been settled on an unprecedentedly liberal scale by Walpole, who had secured his power by outbidding Compton on the King's accession, and provided £830,000 for George, and a separate jointure of £100,000 for Queen Caroline. It was a distinctly understood thing when the list was settled that it included £100,000 for the Prince, and there is little wonder that he made a grievance at his shabby treatment in the matter and at the King's refusal to pay the debts he left behind him at Hanover, or that he chafed at the state of tutelage in which he was placed by his scanty income and his residence under the paternal eye at St. James's.

Nor was there any disinclination on George's part to provide his son with other grievances. There was the notorious matter of the suppression of George the First's will and that of his brother, the Bishop of Osnaburgh, for instance. At the first council held after the old King's death George snatched up his father's will from under the very nose of Archbishop Wake, who produced

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

it, put it into his pocket, and it was never seen again. The council stared at each other, and though they all agreed later that the royal cat should be belled, no one was found with courage enough to attempt the process. George the First, no doubt with a remembrance of his own conduct in a similar matter, had very thoughtfully deposited a duplicate of the will with the Duke of Wolfenbittel. But his son was equal to the emergency. There was some diplomatic question pending at the time between Hanover and that duchy, and George at once instructed Newcastle, his Secretary of State, to send a messenger to the Duke agreeing to the treaty he wished, on his own terms, in exchange for the duplicate will. Frederick thought he might be remembered by his grandfather in that document, and had a natural grievance in its suppression. The matter was not in the least improved when the King paid Lord Chesterfield £20,000 in respect of a legacy said to have been left by his father to the Duchess of Kendal, whose daughter, Lady Walsingham, Chesterfield married. Then the thrifty King impounded Frederick's income from the Duchy of Lancaster; there had been great embezzlement by a dishonest official during his own enjoyment of the revenues as Prince of Wales, and he thought proper to consider his deficit a first charge on the duchy when it came to his son, so he intercepted the whole income. As to the Bishop of Osnaburgh's will, George would not produce it.

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

and declared roundly that everything was left to himself as nephew. But he met another masterful personality in this business in Frederic of Prussia, who insisted on seeing it, and rescued the jewels from his relative's clutches, which he found were bequeathed to his Queen. No wonder altogether that Frederick felt aggrieved, and when the King went a second time to Parliament about some shortage which he thought he had discovered in the yield of the sources of income allotted to satisfy his civil list, and got the convenient Walpole to coax the reluctant Commons into taking his view of the matter, the Prince, as Hervey tells us, was "extremely flippant in his comment on this measure, and pretended to disapprove entirely his father's conduct on this occasion."

It does not seem necessary to search further for causes of dissension between father and son in such circumstances as these, though there were others not far away. Frederick wished for a military training; it was forbidden him, and bestowed upon his brother, the Duke of Cumberland. The King went to Hanover, passed over Frederick in naming the Queen as Regent, and ordained that wherever her Majesty had her dwelling, whether in London or at Kew, there must Frederick be tied to her apron-string. Here, surely, were all the elements of a family quarrel which was likely to outvie that between Dapper George and his father in virulence. If we add that there was a hungry opposition almost panting

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

for the blood of the court minister, Sir Robert Walpole, who was just getting comfortably seated in a renewed lease of power, and hoping to use the Prince as a fireship for the holy purpose of blowing the minister from his anchorage; that Queen Caroline, as time went on, was, if possible, more set against her son than King George himself, we can picture a set of circumstances likely to produce a very unedifying exhibition of the traditional Brunswick rancour. As it turned out, the omens were not belied, and the result exceeded expectation. The family feuds of the Georges were certainly at high-water mark during the twenty-two years of Frederick's remaining life; it is equally certain that he was not alone, or even chiefly, to blame.

One would be inclined, perhaps, to consider as Frederick's chief misfortune the place his enemy Lord Hervey held at court. Hervey had married the beautiful Mary Lepel, one of Princess Caroline's maids of honour, and on the Prince's accession had been taken over by Walpole as a sort of court appanage, who gave him a pension of £1000 a year, and appointed him vice-chamberlain to the Queen. He was on terms of the greatest confidence with that royal lady, and was of the greatest use to Walpole as a means of communication, through her, with the King. At the time of the old King's death he was abroad for his health, found Frederick installed at St. James's upon his return, and before six months were passed was

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

the Prince's open and declared enemy. Hervey himself never gave any reason for this quarrel, but it was an open secret that Frederick, in the manner of his house, had taken a certain Miss Vane as his favourite with whom Hervey had previously been on the same terms, and Hervey repaid the injury with the greatest malignancy that can be imagined. He deliberately set himself to foment the differences already existing between Frederick and his parents, boasted of his success in presenting every action or motive of the son in the worst possible light, and never lost an opportunity of poisoning the Queen's mind where the Prince was concerned. The one thing that can be urged for Hervey is the candour with which he rejects any show of impartiality. Writing of himself in the third person, as was his habit, in those astounding memoirs which he left to illuminate that extraordinary court, this is what he admits of his attitude towards the Prince—

“The pains he (that is, himself, Lord Hervey) took to bring Sir Robert Walpole into every scheme to mortify the Prince, and the zeal with which he laboured every project to distress H.R.H., would not, I believe, if one could have dived into the deepest source of every action, have been found to proceed merely from his desire to prevent Sir Robert losing his interest with the King and Queen, any more than I imagine all the severe and bitter things he said to the King and Queen at this time of their son flowed solely from

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

a desire to make court to their passions, and not a little to indulge the dictates of his own."

The man who writes thus of himself was he who stood at the Queen's ear as long as she lived, through whose malevolence every word and action of the Prince was filtered, and tintured in the process, and who was his chief biographer. It was, we repeat, Frederick's greatest misfortune to have had this man as a devil's advocate during the greater part of his life, and as the recording angel of his sins.

Frederick accordingly, in such surroundings, and with many grievances, real or fancied, was accustomed to make the most of them, to pose in public as an injured innocent, and to gain whatever access of popularity was forthcoming from the circumstances in which he found himself. The family secrets at St. James's were no secret in the streets; the lack of funds for the princely establishment was advertized by the ostentatious dismissal of servants and by the borrowing of prodigious sums, to be repaid when he came to the crown. He would attend at a fire at dead of night, carry water and handle the pumps side by side with the meanest citizen, and be greeted with loud cries of, "Crown him! Crown him!" and next day the papers would give him credit for having saved a whole Inn of Court from destruction. Similar ovations would attend him at the play, would be reported by the faithful Hervey to the Queen, and cause her and her royal husband much

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

perturbation of spirit. Then the failure of the Double Marriage project was a real grievance for poor Frederick; he saw princes of other royal houses of Europe settled with princesses and establishments of their own, and given commands in the great marchings and countermarchings which were going on along the Rhine, while he was an unconsidered appanage of the English court of distinctly less importance than a vice-chamberlain. A wife of any sort would be something, he decided, so he determined to choose one for himself.

There was living at that time at Marlborough House the dowager Duchess of Marlborough, who in old age had lost little of the spirit which had distinguished the Sarah Jennings of an earlier period. The Duchess was no great admirer of his Majesty, whom she was accustomed to speak of as "neighbour George," and was quite ready to undertake to ease the Prince of his love-pains by providing him with a wife and a comfortable dowry. So she chose Lady Diana Spencer from among her grandchildren, provided a parson, and a place for the ceremony at her own lodge in Windsor Great Park, and was ready with £100,000 for Frederick so soon as the knot was tied. Walpole, however, got wind of the plot, and was just in time to prevent its accomplishment, and Frederick was naturally in worse odour than ever with George and Caroline.

It is useless to follow the details of the differ-

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

ences that ensued as time went on, the puerile disputes in which neither side appears to any advantage, but in which the parents were at least as much to blame as the son, who really had substantial grievances. The great Mr. Handel, who was the Princess Royal's music master, had engaged in Opera at the Haymarket, and must be protected and encouraged by the King and Queen accordingly. This was an excellent reason for Frederick to extend his favour to Mr. Handel's rival, Signor Buonicini, whom he ostentatiously supported at the old theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. This discord over the rival harmonies of the two virtuosos became quite important politically: an anti-Handelist was looked upon by the court party as disloyal to the Crown, and to appear at Lincoln's Inn for a peer or member of the Commons was as bad as voting against his Majesty in Parliament. The King would sit freezing at the empty Haymarket Opera, while Frederick, at the head of a great number of the nobility, would preside over a much more festive company to listen to Signor Buonicini's warbling *prima donna* farther east.

So Frederick drifted farther and farther from his parents. He appeared at the levées at rarer and rarer intervals, and called to pay his respects to his mother at intervals longer still. When he did appear the worst of motives were assigned to his most simple acts. If the Queen were ill he only called to gloat over her state, and to calcu-



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

late how soon her cough would carry her off; if he sought the King's presence it was only to court rebuff of which to make an additional grievance outside. One may read pages of these suspicions solemnly recorded by Hervey, of head-waggings between Queen, courtier and minister in order to place Frederick at a disadvantage, and give the very worst of appearances to everything he did or said or thought. At length, in 1734, Frederick, at the age of twenty-seven, feeling the uncertainties of his position heavy upon him, resolved to make a personal appeal to the King. He appeared one morning accordingly at the King's apartments in St. James's quite suddenly and without notice of any sort, and requested an audience of his Majesty. His Majesty, after consultation with Walpole, graciously permitted his son to enter. Frederick had three requests to lay at the royal feet. He prayed to be allowed to serve a campaign on the Rhine; to be allowed an increased revenue, for he was grievously in debt; and lastly to be provided with a wife of a suitable rank in order to fill the desolate places of his heart and household. The requests seem reasonable to us, but they appeared otherwise to his Majesty. To the first two he deigned no reply, as to the last, he intimated that it should be taken into consideration when the Prince "should behave more respectfully to his mother." The whole interview, it appears from Hervey, was put down to the malevolent inspiration of the opposition, with a certain

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

cornet of horse, young Mr. William Pitt, at their head, and as such was greatly resented by their Majesties. Was ever a royal prince in so hopeless a position?

The King, however, bore the matter of the desired princess in mind, and on one of his visits to Hanover looked about for a young lady worthy of the distinguished position of wife to the son of whose dignity he was so careful. This fortunate damsel turned out to be the young Princess Augusta, daughter of Frederic Duke of Saxe Gotha, and although at present nothing had been proposed in England, George practically brought that young lady back for the Prince in his pocket, on his return from Hanover in October of 1735. All the historians are agreed that his Majesty came back in a very ill temper. As a matter of fact, he had been love-making on his own account, and was very sore at having to leave the object of his affections, a young German lady by the name of Madame de Walmoden. There had been a great banquet and leave-taking at Herrenhausen, at which the King swore faithfully to return in the following May, and the lady had risen and pledged that happy date in a bumper. But those six months of waiting were not at all to the King's taste, and he came back to England in the most awful of rages. He fell foul of everybody, from the Queen downwards. Her Majesty was accused of "always stuffing herself" when he saw her take her chocolate; the Duke of Cumberland was

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

abused because he stood awkwardly; the Princess Caroline for growing fat. Nothing in England was right for him. No Englishman knew how to come into a room, no Englishwoman how to dress herself; no English cook could dress a dinner, no English player act, no English coachman drive, no English jockey ride, no English horse was fit to be ridden or driven; while at Hanover perfection reigned in every aspect of life. His ministers and secretaries of state were scoundrels or puppets, and as for his Majesty's bishops, they were "a set of black canting, hypocritical rascals." Hervey, who reports these megrims of the love-smitten George, owned to a friendship with Bishop Hoadley; "Then, my lord," says his Majesty, "you have a great puppy and a very dull fellow and a great rascal for your friend; a canting, hypocritical knave to be crying the kingdom of Christ at the same time that he, as Christ's ambassador, receives six or seven thousand a year." Hervey notes that the only member of the family to escape the King's wrath was Frederick himself, but he owed this immunity to the fact that the King never spoke of him. He would never talk of him directly, but managed to get in an oblique buffet on occasion. He would remark, for instance, how often worthy fathers had unworthy sons; a brave father would have a son a poltroon; a father very honest would have a son a great knave; a father would be a man of truth and his son a great liar; as who should say what a pitiful tragedy of that very

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

kind was under his hearer's nose at St. James's. At other times he would abuse Frederick in effigy, as it were. He went to the play and saw *Henry IV.*, in which he admitted there were some very good players, "but as for the Prince of Wales, he must own he never saw so awkward a fellow and so mean a looking scoundrel in his life." So the winter went on with pain and tribulation for all who came in contact with this sore-headed monarch.

It was not till February that he vouchsafed any information to Frederick as to his designs for his marriage. He then sent five members of the council to impart the news to the Prince, who made answer, "with great decency, duty and propriety, that whoever his Majesty thought a proper match for his son would be agreeable to him." So Lord De la Warr was duly sent over to demand the Princess in proper terms of her brother, the reigning Duke. The preparations for this embassy, and the subsequent arrangements for the projected marriage, of course, consumed some little time, when King George took the occasion to declare in set terms to the Queen and the ministers that if matters should not be arranged before April was out, the wedding should either be put off to the following winter or should take place without his own august assistance, "for set out for Hanover as soon as Parliament had risen he positively would." The Queen urged the importance of not irritating the bishops by hurrying

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

them in some Church matter then before Parliament. "I am sick to death of all this foolish stuff," replied the King, "and wish with all my heart that the devil may take your bishops, and the devil take your minister, and the devil take the Parliament, and the devil take the whole island, provided I can get out of it and go to Hanover." Such was the mood for six months of this elderly Cupid dying for his Psyche.

His Majesty's turbulence, perhaps, hastened matters, at any rate news reached London on Sunday the 25th of April that Lord De la Warr had at length reached Greenwich with the Princess, where Frederick hurried to meet his bride. He was charmed with the natural graces of a young girl of seventeen, with the freshness and modest simplicity which captivated all who saw her. The young girl came from her school-room unattended by a single lady, knew no soul in the country where her future lot was cast, could speak no word of its language. And yet her ingenuousness, her obvious good-nature and wish to please, her natural good breeding softened every heart and silenced every envious tongue. Even the King and Queen were touched with the natural courtesy which urged the young girl to throw herself at full length at their feet at the presentation at St. James's; wonder of all, Horace Walpole forgot to be captious, and Hervey laid aside his sneer in writing of the young Princess. The Queen seemed affected by the circumstances, and was a

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

little less ungracious to her son. There was little time allowed for any wooing, a few trips on the water by the lovers, a meal or two eaten more or less in public, which interested the good British people, and then the ceremony, with its four Lady Carolines to attend the Princess, its drums and trumpets, its salvoes of artillery to announce the joyful news to the lieges, its banquets and its addresses in Parliament. Young Mr. Pitt was so eloquent in the Commons upon the virtues of the son, and, by implication, so insulting to the father; that he incurred the King's lasting enmity, and at the end of the session was broke. Frederick got his allowance increased to £50,000, and King George, after admonishing him that where the Queen resided, there must the Prince and his bride pitch their own tent, again set out for his seat of delight at Herrenhausen and his Walmoden, just in time to arrive on the auspicious 29th of May.

Frederick's married life thus began with only indifferent promise of any cordial relations between his own and the paternal household, and it cannot be said that his own conduct contributed to any improvement. He was sore at being left out of the regency, at being a virtual prisoner under the Queen's eye, at the withholding of his rightful income, and he showed his soreness in a variety of petty ways. The Queen set out for Richmond the morning the King left for Hanover; Frederick refused to follow her on the score

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

of the Princess's illness—measles, a rash, a great cold, as he variously reported it. Her Majesty posted up from Richmond with her daughters to see her daughter-in-law, but that lady keeping her bed in a darkened room, her Majesty had to return to Richmond little the wiser as to the true state of her health. Frederick would come late to the council, the Princess late to chapel, all to the intense annoyance of the Queen, who was constantly on the look-out for matter of offence, as Hervey makes quite clear. The Princess, still, be it remembered, a young girl, would amuse herself by dressing and undressing a doll; the Queen begged she should discontinue the process because it made the sentries laugh, who saw it through the palace window. After entertaining the young couple at dinner, the Queen would ostentatiously yawn at Lord Hervey, and protest that she was so fatigued at the silly gaiety of her son and the stupidities of her daughter-in-law "that she felt more tired than if she had carried them both round the garden on her back." All this, and more of the same sort, Hervey put down in his record to the prejudice, as he hoped, of the Prince, but he unwittingly did a greater injury to his patrons by exposing the spirit which animated Frederick's family in their smallest dealings with him. Frederick, at the age of thirty, in fact, was treated like a child, and he resented the treatment in a rather childish manner. That seems to be the worst indictment to be drawn against

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

him for his part in the puerilities of this petty dispute.

Meanwhile King George, taking his pleasure at Herrenhausen with the Walmoden, was becoming highly unpopular with his subjects in England; the streets were full of ribald jokes at his gallantries, the broadsheets with the choicest productions of the makers of indecent ballads. Even the precincts of the palace at St. James's were profaned by the efforts of the disloyal wits. One of these traitorous effusions, not at all lacking in point, was found pasted on the palace gate: "Lost or strayed out of this house, a man who has left a wife and six children on the parish. Whoever will give any tidings of him to the Churchwardens of St. James's, so as he may be got again, shall receive four shillings and sixpence reward. N.B. —This reward will not be increased, nobody judging him to deserve a crown." George at length, after a six months' honeymoon with the Walmoden, judged it time to return to St. James's, and set out in a great hurry accordingly at the end of November.

There were some very exciting circumstances attending his return. Sir Charles Wager commanded the royal yacht, and awaited his Majesty at Helvoetsluys with a considerable squadron of British men-o'-war as escort. The King arrived at that port and chafed at the delay caused by contrary winds, which at length increased to a gale of uncommon violence. Sir Charles said it was unsafe



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

to put to sea. "I'm not afraid," said the King. "I am," said the sailor. "I'd rather be twelve hours at sea than twenty-four at Helvoetsluys," replied his Majesty. "You need not reckon on twelve, Sir," rejoined the sailor, "four will do your business." "Set sail," replied the King. "Well, Sir," said the sailor, "you can oblige me to go, but I can make you come back again." So it proved. The fleet was scattered, several ships cast away with many lives lost; news reached London of the disaster without any tidings of the royal yacht, and England, for a period of twelve hours, believed that her King had perished in the North Sea. Only later came the tidings that Wager had navigated the yacht back to Helvoetsluys, after a tossing which made "his Majesty as tame as any about him," and the tamed Majesty accordingly waited five weeks at the Dutch port before he landed safe at Harwich early in January of 1737. He was quite subdued, it was noticed, was civil to the Queen and his daughters, and even kissed Frederick.

These favourable signs, however, lasted for a short time only; Frederick wanted money, and having tried his Majesty on a former occasion with ill-success, he committed the unpardonable sin of going to his Majesty's opposition for assistance in his needs. He chose the exact moment, too, when the King, upset by the fatigues of his tempestuous voyage, was lying by for a bit. Frederick had begun canvassing among the anti-court peers,

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

and the rebellious and independent members of the Commons; one of his friends tried to engage Mr. Henry Fox's interest, Mr. Fox's brother Stephen was Lord Hervey's most intimate friend, and naturally set off in haste to my lord with the news. My lord, full of his subject, met the Queen coming out of the sick chamber; her Majesty would not believe it. Let Lord Weymouth see Sir Robert at once, meanwhile not a word to the King. Sir Robert confirmed the news, and there followed a most portentous conference between Queen, courtier and minister. Her Majesty was quite frightened. Here was the King ill, certainly unpopular on account of those dreadful doings at Hanover, and Frederick chooses this moment, of all others, to advertise the family quarrels and play into the very hands of the Jacobites. Lord Scarborough must go and dissuade him from so undutiful a course.

Lord Scarborough went, but Frederick was proof against his eloquence. "He did not want to distress his father," he said, "but he and his advisers were of opinion that a yearly allowance of £100,000 was due to him by an Act of Parliament already passed, and he saw no great crime in going to that body to ask them to expound their own instrument. It was not his fault, but those who drove him to it; finally, the business was out of his hands already, and he could do nothing in the matter."

Hervey records that at about the time of Fred-

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

erick's marriage his mother and sister were inclined to relent a little in their hostility to the Prince, to find excuses for him against the courtier's attacks, who never left him unpersecuted for a single day; "Fred was not such a fool as one took him for; could be very amusing, was even generous at times, and his heart, like his head, was both good and bad." Hervey would not admit it even to the Queen and Princesses, and certainly came to his justification by those ladies at this distressful moment. The rancour exhibited by the Queen against her son in Hervey's narrative is amazing, and it is easy to fix the high-water mark of her resentment at the moment when she learned that Frederick had made a public movement against the restraints of his position. "Her invectives against her son," says Hervey, "were incessant and of the strongest kind, and more tears flowed on this occasion than I ever saw her shed on all others put together. They neither of them made much ceremony of wishing a hundred times a day that the Prince might drop down dead of an apoplexy, the Queen cursing the hour of his birth, the Princess Caroline declaring she grudged him every hour he continued to breathe. He loved nothing but money and his own nauseous self; was the greatest liar that ever spoke, would put one arm about a body's neck and stab him with the other." One begins to doubt, after reading pages of this sort of invective, whether Queen Caroline was so happy in her vice-chamberlain after all.



*Her Royal Highness Wilhelmina Charlotte, Princess of Wales.*

Original by J. Smith, 1797. Sold by J. Smith at 1/2 per cent. in Royal Street, Covent Garden.

Queen Caroline as Princess of Wales



## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM.

Nothing could stop Frederick, however; the whole Cabinet took a written message to him from the King, some half-dozen dukes and earls among them. He received them very politely, thanked his Majesty for any instance of goodness to him and the Princess; but the matter of his allowance was really out of his hands, and he must leave it with his advisers. So the Pitts, Pulteneys, and lesser lights of the Prince's party were very eloquent in the Commons; Walpole replied not very convincingly, but found a much stronger argument in the lobbies, where he made certain of a majority of thirty votes against Frederick. The Queen naïvely admitted to Lord Hervey that it cost much less than was expected, the King only had to expend about £900 in bribes, and as he saved a clear £50,000 a year by the transaction, it was eminently profitable. Carteret took the matter to the Lords, where the Prince was rather less successful than in the Commons. So Frederick remained a pensioner at the King's pleasure, and the breach between himself and his parents yawned wider than ever.

It was in July of this same year 1737, that Frederick, addressing his mother by letter in the French tongue, acquainted her, as in duty bound, with the interesting news that his princess had hopes of a family. No date was mentioned at which the happy event was likely to take place, and it is perhaps significant of the way in which her son and his wife were regarded by the Queen

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

that both then and afterwards she professed incredulity of the news. When, however, the matter was beyond doubt, Frederick was the subject of the most odious suspicions at court. Both King, Queen and minister all credited the Prince with the infamous intention of imposing a changeling on the nation. The thing would be incredible, had not Hervey placed it beyond any doubt. It was resolved that the King should send a message to the Prince intimating his pleasure that the Princess should lie in at Hampton Court, and the Queen expressed her positive intention of attending her daughter-in-law during her illness. "I will be sure it is her child," she said, and she emphasized her suspicions in the plainest way to Walpole, who had shown no hurry in drafting the King's message, by saying, "Sir Robert, we shall be caught; he will remove her from Hampton Court before he receives any orders, and will say afterwards that he talked so publicly of his intentions he concluded if the King had not approved of them, he should have heard something of it." Walpole replied there was plenty of time, as the event was not yet expected. So the message was delayed, and, indeed, never went at all.

All this must be borne in mind in what followed. On a Sunday, at the end of the same month, the rather dull court of George the Second at Hampton had dispersed as usual; the King had had his game of commerce, the Queen had finished

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

hers at quadrille, Lord Hervey and the Princess Caroline their cribbage, and all were in bed before eleven o'clock had struck. At half-past one Mrs. Tichburne, the woman of the bedchamber, woke the Queen by knocking at her bedroom door. "Is the house on fire?" inquired her startled Majesty. "No, Ma'am," replied Mrs. Tichburne; "but the Princess is taken ill." "My God! my nightgown," says the Queen; "I'll go to her at once." "Your nightgown, Madam," rejoined Mrs. Tichburne, "and your coaches, too; the Princess is at St. James's." "Are you mad, or are you asleep, my good Tichburne? You dream." But good Tichburne insisted, and the King, awake by this time, joined in. "You see now, with all your wisdom," said his Majesty, "how they have outwitted us. This is all your fault. There is a false child will be put upon you, and how will you answer it to all your children? This has been fine care and fine management for your son William. He will be mightily obliged to you." The Queen dressed in haste, collected the Duke of Grafton, Lord Hervey, her two daughters, and Lord Essex as a messenger to come back with news to the King, and set off for St. James's, where the party arrived at four o'clock in the morning.

Frederick, indeed, had stolen a march upon them, and this was his answer to their suspicions and innuendoes. He met his mother at the top of the staircase and informed her that a daughter had



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

been vouchsafed to him. She went to see the Princess, supposed she had suffered greatly, was assured that that was not the case, kissed the child, and went back to Lord Hervey's apartment in the palace to drink a cup of chocolate, saying, with a wink at that nobleman, "You need not fear my drinking anything on that side of the house," as if to intimate that there might be a danger of poison in her son's household. "If instead of this poor ugly she-mouse," she added, "there had been a brave, fat, jolly boy, I should not have been cured of my suspicions; I should have gone about his house like a mad woman, and insisted on knowing what chairman's brat he had bought."

Frederick has been much blamed for this transaction, and, if it were altogether intentional, nothing in the world could excuse him for having placed his young wife in such danger by that midnight journey to London. But that is by no means certain. He and the Princess, who had been twice deceived by false alarms during the previous week, were undoubtedly taken by surprise, and it seems probable that Frederick posted off in a flurry where he judged the best medical advice was to be had, and the Ministers of State proper to the ceremony most easily summoned. Upon starting he sent messengers to the Lord Chancellor, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the President of the Council and the Lord Privy Seal, and the two last were at his wife's bedside at St. James's.

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

Above all, Frederick had been insulted by the odious insinuation that he contemplated treason to the King and the nation by imposing a changeling upon them, and, apart from the danger in which he placed his wife (which, if he realized it, was indeed unpardonable), his conduct is perhaps deserving of less reprobation than that of the court of which it was the result. But from all points of view, it must be confessed, it was a sorry business.

The breach now was irreparable. The Queen called once more to see the Princess; the Prince attended her to her carriage in the courtyard of St. James's, and incurred the charge of hypocrisy by kneeling in the mud to kiss her hand, in order, so she said, "to appear as the dutiful son in public." There followed another council of the King, Queen and minister, and Frederick was forbidden to come to court, or to see his outraged parents again. It was also intimated to him that so soon as the Princess's condition would admit of it, he and his belongings were to be removed from St. James's. History, in fact, repeated itself, and George and his son parted at St. James's on much the same terms as George and his father twenty years earlier. The foreign ministers were notified that it would be agreeable to the King if they forbore waiting on the Prince, and the native nobility and gentry were told in plain terms that whoever went to the Prince would not be admitted at court. Frederick was deprived of his guard of

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

honour, and upon the Princess's convalescence went off to Leicester Fields, the "Pouting Place of princes." He was forbidden to remove any furniture from the palace, even chests or boxes. "They can hardly carry away their clothes like linen in a basket," suggested Lord Hervey. "Why not?" replied the King; "a basket is good enough for them." So Frederick left the paternal roof, and the King said, "Thank God, the puppy is out of my house," and there was a final discussion of the Prince's enormities between his parents and Lord Hervey. His lordship took the occasion to remind the Queen that she had defended Frederick against his aspersions so recently only as the date of his marriage. "My dear lord," replied her Majesty, "I will give it under my hand, if you are in any fear of my relapsing, that my dear firstborn is the greatest ass, and the greatest liar, and the greatest *canaille*, and the greatest beast in the whole world, and I most heartily wish he was out of it." That might almost be considered her Majesty's valedictory address to her son and heir; it was spoken in October of 1737, and she never saw him again, for on the 20th of the following month she was herself dead.

We must not recall at any length that dreadful deathbed scene of Queen Caroline, which, as related with painful minuteness by Hervey, is one of the best known pages of court history. Frederick sent a dutiful inquiry as to his mother's

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

illness; the King forbade him to make any other, and so natural an act on the part of the son was twisted by the court and their scribe into a desire to gloat over the last moments of his mother. So Frederick was denied the blessing which his brother and sisters received, and the dying Queen had no thought for her eldest-born. She died, as she had lived, devoted to her husband; while that extraordinary monarch, though beside himself with grief, managed to display in a sentence the whole philosophy of his union with the wife whom he still dearly loved. In almost her last moment the Queen urged him to marry again. "Non, j'aurai des maitresses," blubbered George. "Mon Dieu!" sighed the Queen; "cela n'empêche pas."

Among the greatest reasons for doubting the justice of Lord Hervey's virulent indictment of Frederick Prince of Wales is the fact that with the death of Queen Caroline, when that nobleman's dismal story ceased, the chief record of Frederick's enormities comes to an end. When Frederick came to die, Horace Walpole recited his faults with an unsparing pen, but admitted, however grudgingly, some corresponding virtues. In such more impartial testimony as exists upon Frederick's doings during the fourteen years he had still to live, there is little recorded against him. He was undoubtedly popular, even Walpole admits as much, though he assigns his favour with the public to their hatred of his brother, the Duke of Cumberland. With the disappearance, too, of Queen

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

Caroline and her henchman Hervey from the court, those acute and irreconcilable differences of personality of father and son were no longer subjected to a perpetual chafing, and there was a gratifying absence of those scandalous and indecent bickerings of which Hervey was at once the promoter and the historian. Frederick had a court of his own, at which the chiefs of the opposition gathered, and which, politically, was opposed tooth and nail to the court party under Walpole. Here, at different times, gathered Pulteney, Carteret, Dodington, Bolingbroke, Chesterfield, Lyttleton and Pitt, with many politicians of less note, and from Frederick's court frequent alarums and excursions were made upon the policy of the Minister by one or other of those gentlemen. As a party, perhaps, this opposition left little impress upon national affairs, but individuals among Frederick's political advisers later became national forces in themselves, the mighty Pitt, for example, who graduated in politics in the Prince's party, and a later recruit, Lord Bute, whose influence over Frederick's son in the next reign bore such bitter fruit for his country. But after Walpole's fall in 1742, there were distinctly improved relations between the King and his son. George, it was said, was moved by the dangers of the Rebellion of the '45 to seek a healing of the family quarrel; an agent of his Majesty suggested a submissive letter from the Prince, which Frederick, after some demur, consented to write, and, to the joy of the

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

town, the Prince appeared at the next Drawing-Room, and kissed his Majesty's hand. Wonder of all, there was a mingling of the two hostile courts on this joyful occasion, and there followed a visit by both King and Prince to the Duchess of Norfolk's reception through illuminated streets lighted by bonfires. It was understood that there was an increased allowance. "He will now have enough money," writes Horace Walpole, "to tune up Glover and Thomson and Dodsley," which is Horace's pleasant way of alluding to Frederick's patronage of those poets. There were even reviews and pageants "to gladden the heart of David and Absalom," and a journey by river by Frederick and his princess to the spot of their first meeting at Greenwich.

But it is to be feared that there was little real reconciliation. Frederick's creditable wish to go the campaign against the Stuart rebels in Scotland was rebuffed, and the command given to his brother, and he was left out of the Regency when George and William went to the Rhine and fought at Dettingen. It is pleasant to read that Frederick's good offices were employed on behalf of some of the vanquished insurgents; his supplication is said to have saved Lord Cromartie, and to have put an end to the durance which Flora Macdonald suffered for succouring Prince Charles. But it was noticed that when the King came back to receive the demonstrations of loyalty which awaited him in London, George, no longer anxious

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

about his own popularity, was again distinctly cold to his son.

So poor Frederick was forced, despite himself, to continue his rôle of useless, unconsidered, neglected Prince of Wales, without the faintest opportunity of displaying whatever qualities of good or efficiency might be latent in his character. It was a heavy lot for a man in a station so exalted, that of the idler and trifler confined to the mild delights of London and its suburbs, while the other young men of his own station were making history all over Europe. But there is little harm recorded of Frederick in circumstances which might have lent themselves to serious trouble: some good indeed. He was thoughtful for others, gave lavishly to people in want, like poor debtors and maimed soldiers, protected the arts, in a feeble way, it is true, but with all good intentions, let us hope. He had a fine country house at Cliveden from 1737 onwards, where he patronized Mr. James Thomson, the poet. Thomson had lost a post by some change of ministry, and being good-naturedly asked by Frederick as to the state of his affairs, replied with some humour that "they were in a more poetical posture than formerly." So Frederick gave him a hundred a year, enough, as he said, to keep him from starving, but not enough to prevent his working. It is worthy of recollection that "Rule Britannia" was first heard under the auspices of Frederick at Cliveden, when Thomson and Mallet produced their masque of

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

*Alfred* in 1740. Traditions long survived of Frederick at that fine mansion on the Thames, of cricket on the lawn, of the little theatre in the garden, of the Prince's walks along the riverside, his prizes for rowing matches, his condescension with labourers and fishermen, with whom he would discuss the mysteries of their craft, and even share a meal at times. He was often seen, too, enjoying the sights of the town with the lieges; he would appear at Bartholomew Fair, holding the little Prince George by the hand, preceded by Mr. Rich the actor, and making a brave show in his ribbon and garter in the torch-light. The Lord Mayor's show, too, would attract him; he was recognized in his incognito by the members of the Sadlers' Company, who had a stand in front of their hall in Cheapside, invited to take a place, and was so pleased that he accepted the mastership of that worshipful company, whose hall his portrait by Mr. Frye still adorns.

This harmless, if useless, life continued with little variety until the spring of 1751. On a cold afternoon in March of that year Frederick, who had been to Kew, returned to Carlton House, and, changing into a light coat, lay on a sofa near an open window on the ground floor for three hours, caught a chill, and lay by for a few days. In the evening of the 20th of March he was seized with a fit of coughing, which the doctor expected would relieve him. This doctor, indeed, Wilmot, had just left the room with the remark that the Prince



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

was now sure of a good night's rest. The cough returned, his valet was holding him up in bed, when Frederick said suddenly, "Je sens la mort," and the servant, who felt him shiver, exclaimed, "Good God, the Prince is going!" The Princess, who was at the foot of the bed, snatched up a candle, but before she could reach his side Frederick was dead. He had been struck in the side by a tennis ball three years before, an imposthume had formed, and its breaking choked him.

It was Lord North who took the news to King George at Kensington, whom he found looking over a card-table, at which some of the court were playing. Lord North whispered his message. "Dead, is he?" replied his Majesty; "why, they told me he was better," and walking round to the Walmoden, he observed, "Countess, Fred is gone." Never was a prince of a great nation buried with so little ceremony; no one seemed to think it worth while to make a fuss. So poor Frederick's obsequies were attended by his little household alone, no bishop read the solemn lines of the service, no English peer walked behind his coffin, and his ashes were laid in the Abbey without anthem or organ. His Princess felt his loss acutely, and his son George "cried extremely," but one can read much in the annals of those times without finding any one else to mourn him.

The scribes, of course, were busy with his memory, but, after the manner of their kind, were

## A ROYAL FEUD AND ITS VICTIM

more concerned with his follies than his virtues. The circumstances of his private life were recounted with the usual relish, and much that was said on that score cannot be denied. But it may at least be urged that his court was as reputable as those of his father and grandfather. Lady Archibald Hamilton had the credit of being his mistress; but, as she had a family of ten before his acquaintance with her began, it may be conceded that the Prince in this case took no advantage of youth and inexperience. Lady Middlesex is supposed to have succeeded Lady Archibald, but with what justice one neither knows nor cares. Her husband was about the court, and was a party to whatever arrangement was in force. It is quite possible that the son, like the father, was better pleased with the reputation than with the reality of these alliances. It is certain that, apart from these very serious failings, Frederick was an affectionate husband and a good father; even his enemy Walpole admitted as much. Horace recorded some characteristic qualifications, it is true, but as these have been more forcibly set out by Hervey, we will not repeat them here.

Whatever Prince Frederick's faults, it is certain from what is now known of the history of his family that he was never given the opportunity of showing any merit which might have been latent in his character. He came of a virile race, and had Frederick as a boy been taken by the hand and trained to the position he was one day to

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

occupy, it may well have been that he would not have been found wanting. That system of apprenticeship in statecraft, which produced some surprising results in his own cousin Frederic of Prussia, was replaced at the English court by a pitiless suppression which sacrificed the son to the ambition of the mother. It is possible—probable, indeed—that the nation profited by that sacrifice; it is all the more due to the memory of the victim that the price he paid by a life of neglect and contumely should at last be recognized, and his name no longer be mentioned with only a jest or a sneer.

## II

### THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS



## II

### THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

IN one of the most humorous of Addison's *Spectators* we are shown, with an abundance of the playful banter which is characteristic of that kindly moralist, the difficulty of overtaking a lie which has once got a good start. The King of France is reported dead at a fashionable coffee-house of the West End, and the news runs like wildfire through similar establishments all over the town, and provides the oracles of a score of devout audiences with matter for many solemn utterances delivered amidst the incense of much tobacco smoke. The Spectator follows the news from coffee-house to coffee-house, and notes it taking a tincture proper to the interests of each of those famous places of gathering. The Frenchmen who resorted to Giles's were already proceeding to release their friends from the galleys, and establishing them in power and place in France. At Jenny Man's "an alert young fellow cocked his hat upon a friend, and remarked, 'Well, Jack, the old prig's dead at last; sharp's the word, now or never, boy, up to the walls of Paris.'" The

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

wits at Wills's were lamenting the decease of Boileau, Racine and Corneille, "who would have obliged the world with very noble elegies on the death of so great a prince," and so eastward from Nando's to Fish Street, where a politician explained how the death of the French King would "affect our pilchards," and finally to Cheapside, where "a haberdasher who was the chief oracle of the establishment called his admirers to witness that he had declared a week since that the King must have been dead, and that, considering the late advices, it could not have been otherwise. He was enlarging upon this proposition with great authority when there came in a gentleman from Garraway's with the news that the King was in good health, and had gone out a-hunting the very morning the post came away, upon which the haberdasher stole off his hat that hung upon a wooden peg by him, and retired to his shop with great confusion."

In such manner does Addison let his fancy play about the difficulty of refuting a false statement which has been once fairly launched among a credulous public. We need not take that master of the ironical method too literally, but the general proposition of that pleasant paper—the amazing vitality of a lie and its ready acceptance by all classes of people whose credulity it quickens or whose interest it touches—holds good. When a particular lie has an added flavour of scandal, and concerns the life or conversation of those in high

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

places, its acceptance becomes perfectly irresistible by the general public. There was once a lie of this quality in circulation, an examination of which seems to fall within the scheme of our undertaking. It concerned the youthful doings of no less a personage than King George the Third, and was certainly not lacking in a scandalous flavour. Instead of enjoying a day's vogue in the coffee-houses of London, it started early in the long reign of that monarch, and met with a still growing acceptance years after his Majesty was dead; it had, in fact, a career of nearly a century. It is through such a period that we can now trace the story, note its origin in an obscure and scandalous news-sheet, which died in the effort of giving it birth, watch its acceptance by the waggish of one generation of King George's subjects, and its growth into a tradition among an increasing number of the next. Later we may see the adoption of this tradition by the writers of otherwise credible publications. A further stage will bring us to a remarkable development of the legend after King George's death, and its support by whole masses of forged evidence in a famous and impudent claim, to which it was a sort of side-show. By this time the lie had developed into a noxious growth, which, had it become established, might have had very serious consequences. But, dragged at last into the light, it died a sudden death in the antiseptic air of a British court of justice. Its career, however, had been so long unchallenged



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

that it had enlisted the support of a good many worthy people who should have known better, and it is doubtful whether its memory is not still cherished by a few. Certainly at its final refutation there was no "haberdasher to steal his hat from the peg and retire to his shop in confusion." Lastly, although the fable is at last dead, there are certain personalities and circumstances with which it dealt still remaining in an atmosphere of some mystery, and a plain statement of the whole amazing story seems to present promise of some points of interest.

It was in February of 1776, when George the Third had been nearly sixteen years on the throne and was thirty-eight years of age, that there appeared in London the first number of a news-sheet under the title of the *Citizen*. The paper was published on the 24th of that month, and was announced as being sold by John Wheeble, 22 Fleet Street. Among other attractions promised to its readers was the following—

"Court Fragments, which will be published by the *Citizen* for the Use, Instruction, and Amusement of Royal Infants and Young Promising Noblemen.

(1) "The History and Adventures of Miss L . . . t, the Fair Quaker; wherein will be faithfully portrayed some striking pictures of female constancy and princely gratitude, which terminated in the untimely death of that young lady, and the sudden death of a disconsolate mother."

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

Such, so far as can be ascertained, was the first appearance in print of the hardy legend which we have now to trace through the backstairs gossip of nearly a century. It will be noted that there is little definite statement in this announcement in the *Citizen*, which might indeed have referred to George the Third or to any other prince in Europe. Its vague innuendoes as to the shortcomings of "royal infants" and princes were only developed into definite accusations against King George at a later date. We shall find there were amazing discrepancies in those accusations, but stated in plain terms the charge against George the Third became clear enough. This was that George, when Prince of Wales, fell in love with a young and attractive Quakeress named Hannah Lightfoot, married her, had several children, and kept her in absolute seclusion until her death. The date of the marriage was variously stated. Some of the King's accusers, indeed, denied the marriage altogether, and contended that George's possession of the young woman was but the result of her forced marriage with a convenient bridegroom, who was compensated for his complaisance. The Prince's crime was thus reduced from bigamy to adultery. But the general fact of his connection with Hannah Lightfoot, with the result of a variously estimated family and his seclusion of the young woman, was put forward with all confidence by the original scandal-mongers, and accepted by the *gobemouches* of three genera-

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

tions at least, and it is that acceptance of so inherently improbable a story that seems to justify our inquiry.

There could surely be no worse subject for such a scandal than George the Third. Never was a prince whose youthful doings showed more decorum, or whose goings and comings were under more complete surveillance. From the day of his father's death in 1751, until that of his own accession just nine years later, there was so complete an absence of all mystery about the young Prince's doings, and his habits are so well known, that much of his time could be accounted for even at this day. During the whole of those nine years George was the rising hope of one political party and the despair of the other, and he passed his youth in an atmosphere of intrigue and suspicion which kept a hundred eyes upon him. His governors and preceptors and their subordinates were constantly falling out and being changed. Lord North, Dean Ayscough, Lord Waldegrave, Dr. Hayter Bishop of Norwich, the Bishop of Peterborough, as well as a set of understudies who taught him his sums and grammar, all had a hand in his rearing until he passed into the care of the Princess his mother and Lord Bute, with plain Parson Hales, that royal lady's Clerk of the Closet, to look after his soul's welfare. Under the eye of one or other of those jealous guardians, who were themselves jealously watched by others they had displaced, there was, as already suggested, scarce

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

an hour of the exemplary youth's time unaccounted for. Much of it, according to one of them, was passed in sleep. George's only companion was his brother, Prince Edward of York, for the Princess was afraid that his morals might be contaminated by any association with the noble youth of that day, and as a result of the Princess's maternal care, young George grew up entirely after her own heart. We have it on her authority that he was reserved and childish until well on in his teens. Lord Waldegrave declared that he was full of the prejudices fostered by women and pages. Old King George the Second stated roundly that his grandson was fit for nothing but to read the Bible to his mother; it is certain that the pious boy voluntarily learned many of Dr. Doddridge's devotional hymns by heart. His chief relaxations were the study of the art of the locksmith and the dissection of clocks and watches. At the age of seventeen he refused a matrimonial scheme provided for him by his grandfather, and declined a separate establishment at Kensington on the ground that "it would be so great a mortification for his mother," though it is said he thriftily accepted the £40,000 a year which accompanied the old King's offer. His only excursion, indeed, from his mother's apron-string up to the time that he came to the throne seems to have been a tour which he took with Lord Bute to the island from which that nobleman took his title, during which he was assuredly in very

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

safe hands. Finally, when at last he became King, George opened his reign very auspiciously with a proclamation against immorality.

It was this harmless and exemplary youth, reared in such circumstances, who in the Lightfoot story was made to figure as a very villain of melodrama, quick in design and prompt in execution, and with abduction as the least of his crimes, and adultery or bigamy as the alternatives.

These and other circumstances considered, the charge against George involved in the acceptance of the Lightfoot legend was so improbable and grotesque, that there is little wonder that it failed to attract any particular attention during the King's lifetime. None of the reputable gossips of his times had any dealings with it, a fact which in itself is almost sufficient to give the story its proper value. Had it possessed even plausibility it would have been meat and drink for writers like Horace Walpole. The ginger of scandal was hot in Horace's mouth to the end, nothing, indeed, was too spicy even for the prim Miss Berrys in those famous *Reminiscences*, and Horace's correspondents would certainly have received reams of diverting comment on so racy a scandal had it reached him with any shadow of authority. Again, when the copious love affairs of King George's own son, the hopeful Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Fourth, provided the scandal-mongers with a perennial joy, and gave to a great political party a weapon by which they hinted they could

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

an if they would deprive the Prince of his right of succession by reason of his marriage to Mrs. Fitzherbert, is it likely that even a worse *fredaine* of King George's own youth would have escaped exposure by the Whigs, who at the moment were heart and soul in the Prince's interest and against the King? Obviously not. During all those years of strife between George the Third and his son, the Lightfoot story was still only whispered at coffee-houses and taverns, and it remained in the keeping of such company for another generation. It was only well on in the nineteenth century that it gained any real credence, and then at a time when sixty years and more separated the supposed crime from its refutation, the difficulty of which so great a lapse of time enormously increased.

It is noteworthy that the second appearance in print of the Lightfoot story took place under auspices little more reputable than those of its origin in the dingy pages of the *Citizen*. Notable among the literary bravos of the eighteenth century was one William Combe, who is remembered to-day by his more reputable works, of which his *Tours of Dr. Syntax* and his elaborate production describing the river Thames are the most notable; both of which, however, owe their survival in modern collections to the excellence of their illustrations in coloured aquatint by Thomas Rowlandson and Mr. Farington, R.A., respectively. But Combe's main occupation was the production of

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

very different matter, and among a mass of scandal which he either wrote or edited, a typical specimen is the *Royal Register*, which appeared under his auspices in 1779. In the third volume of this *Register*, in an article dealing with King George, may be read the following variation of the legend—

“It is not believed even at this time by many persons who live in the world that he (King George) had a mistress previous to his marriage. Such a circumstance was reported by many, believed by some, disputed by others, but proved by none; and with such a suitable caution was this intrigue conducted that if the body of the people called Quakers, of which the young lady in question was a member, had not divulged the fact by the public proceedings of their meeting concerning it, it would in all probability have remained a matter of doubt to this day.”

This version of the story, it will be seen, appeared three years after its original publication in the *Citizen*, and the point to be borne in mind is that the charge is now limited to a common intrigue, which was only discovered by the action of a body of Quakers in taking disciplinary notice of the backslidings of one of their number. But the central charge of an intrigue against King George when Prince of Wales is treated as an accepted fact.

One supposes that to have been the case among the sort of persons who kept the story going; it is

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

important, however, to remember that it still kept out of all respectable company, and remained as a lickerish morsel among the class who had first propagated it for nearly another generation. One assumes, however, that its constant repetition in such company at length gave it a vitality which started its growth, and resulted in its reaching by slow stages a higher stratum of society. In any case, the legend remained unsupported by further printed repetition for no less than twenty-six years. All the anti-court squibs and lampoons which were produced in such generous measure against King George and his policy through those strenuous last twenty years of the eighteenth century left it unnoticed; one has only to think of the opportunity such a story would have provided for the wits of the *Rolliad*, for example, to see how small was its acceptance by those to whom, had it possessed any real credibility, it would have proved a godsend. But when, in 1815, the Lightfoot legend reappeared, if the story lacked some of its original venom, it was certainly in better company. It was republished, indeed, under the auspices of that very diverting writer, Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, in whose first series of *Historical Memoirs* is the following passage—

“Stories were, indeed, generally circulated concerning his (King George’s) attachment to a young woman, a Quaker, about this time of his life, just as scandal-mongers afterwards whispered that he distinguished Lady Bridget Tollemache by his



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

particular attentions. The former report was probably well founded, and the latter assertion was unquestionably true, but those persons who have enjoyed most opportunities for studying the King's character will most incline to believe that in neither instance did he pass the limits of innocent gallantry or occasional familiarity."

If the legend gains by the authority of Wraxall, it certainly suffers a diminution of its virulent quality, for here the intrigue with Hannah Lightfoot dissolves into a bit of innocent ogling, or at the worst, "occasional familiarity." Most students of the life and times of George the Third will be inclined to believe that his inclinations and opportunities for the greater offence were as strong and as many as for the less. It is quite as easy to think of the Prince George we know provided with all the apparatus of a midnight abduction, and removing Hannah in a coach and four with the assistance of myrmidons in long cloaks and black vizors, as to picture him making sheep's eyes at that lady, and favouring her with an occasional chuck under the chin. The story, in fact, was dwindling to very harmless proportions in 1815. The dark innuendoes of the *Citizen* and the ingenious Mr. Combe, in Wraxall's hands had tapered off into a story of "harmless gallantry." It was reserved for a lady to formulate a charge of a more damaging character. This lady was Mrs. Piozzi, better known to fame as Mrs. Thrale, the friend of Dr. Johnson, and the patroness of that

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

remarkable society at Streatham where so much of the Johnsonian tradition centres. Mrs. Piozzi, who died in 1821, read and annotated Wraxall's memoirs, and as a note to the above quoted passages, she declares in a very authoritative manner, "Her (Hannah Lightfoot's) son by him (King George) is still alive."

Mrs. Piozzi, it will be observed, does not condescend to explain the exact circumstances in which this son was born to parents whom she so confidently associates, and we are left to conjecture whether that son was the result of a secret marriage, as was afterwards alleged, or of a mere vulgar and less courageous intrigue. Here, again, it is very necessary to examine the credentials of this self-appointed judge of her sovereign, who was alive when her judgment was delivered. It must be confessed that this lady was always prepared with pronouncements of this sort concerning prominent individuals, some of which have been taken altogether too seriously. She delivered a judgment in the same annotated volume of Wraxall as to the origin of the founder of an eminent family, Thomas Rumbold, whom she placed as a shoe-black at White's Club in his early youth, a judgment which finds little acceptance to-day, and is, in fact, strenuously resisted by present representatives of the family. It was the same lady's verse, describing the famous portraits at Streatham, which credited Sir Joshua Reynolds with a "cold heart," and there have not

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

been wanting biographers of that great painter since the days of Alan Cunningham to accept that ridiculous estimate of the character of one of the kindest and most generous of men. On the whole, indeed, it can scarcely be claimed that Mrs. Piozzi's *ex cathedra* pronouncement added much to the credibility of the Lightfoot story.

That story, therefore, during King George's lifetime had assumed no serious dimensions, and was contained in the printed innuendoes we have quoted, and the mere rumours reported, without any attempt at supporting evidence, by Wraxall and Mrs. Piozzi. Although the bare suggestion of an intrigue of the sort in connection with such a Puritan in morals as King George the Third is a distinct shock, it must be confessed that there were ample precedents for such shortcomings in his own family, and had such a folly of the youthful Prince in his 'teens been true and proved, it need not have borne very hardly against the reputation of a King who later set a pattern of domestic fidelity for the most virtuous of his subjects. But the scandal-mongers were only waiting for the death of the King to bring forward aspersions of the most injurious character. It was, again, in the convenient pages of a periodical published under doubtful auspices, and still under the shelter of a cautious anonymity, that these charges appeared.

The periodical in question was the *Monthly Magazine*, one of the literary ventures of a prominent journalistic figure of those days, Richard

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

Phillips, and April 1st, 1821, was, in all the circumstances, a very appropriate date for the first communication upon the subject, in which, it will be noticed, King George being dead and buried, the Lightfoot story undergoes an amazing expansion.

A correspondent who signed himself B. opened the ball by a short communication to that journal, in which he says, "All the world is acquainted with the attachment of the late King to a beautiful Quakeress of the name of Wheeler. The lady disappeared on the royal marriage in a way which has always been interesting, because unexplained and mysterious. I have been told she is still alive, or was so lately." B. concluded by asking for information on the subject.

It will be noticed that the "beautiful Quakeress" whose name had been whispered for over sixty years as Hannah Lightfoot now becomes Wheeler, and that a marriage is mentioned for the first time. It is not clear, however, whether a marriage between the Prince and the Quakeress is suggested, or that the "royal marriage" mentioned is that of King George to Queen Charlotte in 1761. In the latter case, it would seem that it was claimed by this correspondent that Hannah was in evidence until the arrival of the Princess Charlotte from Mecklenburg necessitated her disappearance.

However, the information asked for by B. was forthcoming in generous quantity in a later number

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

of the *Monthly Magazine*. In that published on July 1st appeared a long letter dated from Warminster on the 30th of April, and signed "Warminsterensis." This letter requires particular attention as the first statement alleging certain definite facts; it also assumed a certain air of authority, and at length provided critics of the Lightfoot tradition with abundant material upon which to exercise their scepticism.

It appears, then, from "Warminsterensis" that the real name of "the fair Quaker who once engaged the affections of King George was not Wheeler, as stated by B., but Hannah Lightfoot. She lived with her father and mother at the corner of St. James's Market, who kept a shop there (I believe linendrapers). The Prince had often noticed her on his way from Leicester House to St. James's, and was struck with her person. Miss Chudleigh, the late Duchess of Kingston, became his agent. The royal lover's relations took alarm, and sent to inquire for a young man to marry her." This pressing need, it appears, was supplied in the person of one Isaac Axford, who "was shopman to Barton the grocer on Ludgate Hill, and used to chat with her when she came to the shop to buy groceries. A Mr. Perryn of Knightsbridge, it was said, furnished a place of meeting for the lovers. An agent of Miss Chudleigh's called on Axford, and proposed that on his marrying Hannah he should have a considerable sum of money. Hannah stayed for a short



Mrs. Axford

From a Painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds

*(By Permission of Henry Graves & Co)*



## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

time with her husband, and Isaac never saw her more, but he learned that she had gone with Miss Chudleigh. He was a poor-hearted fellow, for by making a bustle about it he might, perhaps, have secured himself a good provision. He told me when I last saw him that he presented a petition at St. James's which was not attended to, also that he had received some money from Perryn's assignees on account of his wife.

"Isaac lived many years as a respectable grocer at Warminster, his native place, but retired from business before his death, which took place about five years ago in the 86th year of his age.

"Many years after Hannah was taken away, her husband, believing her to be dead, married again to a Miss Bartleet of Keevil, North Wilts, and by her succeeded to an estate at Chevrell of about £150 a year. On the report reviving, a few years since, of his first wife's being still living, a Mr. Bartleet, first cousin to Isaac's second wife, claimed the estate on the plea of the invalidity of this second marriage.

"It is said that the late Marquis of Bath, a little before his death, reported that she was then living, and the same has been asserted by other gentlemen of this neighbourhood.

"Hannah was fair and pure, as far as I have ever heard, but, report says, not the purest of the pure, in respect of the house of Mr. Perryn, who left her an annuity of £40 a year. She was, indeed, considered one of the beautiful women



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

of her time, and rather disposed to *embon-point*."

Here, then, at last, is a definite indictment of the virtuous prince and king George. Phillips, the proprietor of the *Monthly Magazine* whose pages it graced, preceded this letter of "Warminsterensis" with an editorial introduction, and speaks of his correspondent as "a respectable gentleman of Warminster." He adds also some particulars of a private inquiry of his own, as supplementary to the information of that respectable gentleman. From these it seems that so late as July 1821 the Axford family were still respectable grocers on Ludgate Hill, and that, upon inquiry there, Phillips soon got upon the track of a son of Isaac by "his second wife," Miss Bartleet. This young Mr. Axford assured Phillips that "Warminsterensis's" information was substantially correct. Hannah, however, lived as long as six weeks with Isaac Axford, who was fondly attached to her, and one evening when he happened to be from home, a coach and four came to his door, into which Hannah was popped and driven off at a gallop, no one knew whither. The unfortunate Isaac was inconsolable at first, and at different times applied for satisfaction "at Weymouth and elsewhere," but without success, and died after sixty years in total ignorance of Hannah's fate. It was reported, however, that she had three sons by her lover, one of whom rose high in the army, that she died and was

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

buried at Islington, and even that she was still alive."

It cannot be held that Mr. Phillips's inquiry was altogether confirmatory of his correspondent's letter. If Isaac had taken "a considerable sum," as stated by the excellent "Warminsterensis," in order to enact the part of the convenient husband required by the Prince's alarmed relatives, he surely had no reason to complain or to be inconsolable when they exacted their share of the bargain in removing the lady. He may, indeed, be considered lucky, in all the circumstances, in having had the advantage of Hannah's society for six weeks, and there seem to have been excellent reasons for his rebuff when he approached the royal presence at "Weymouth and elsewhere."

Certain doubts on these and other points occurred to readers of the magazine, and found a voice in "Brentfordensis," who raised some rather pertinent questions in a letter dated July 12th of the same year 1821. Thus he wished to know why the fair Quakeress was sometimes called Wheeler and sometimes Lightfoot; when and where did the marriage of Hannah take place, and how was it proved that she was the same Quakeress who lived at the corner of St. James's Market and was admired by Prince George; where was she carried off from in the coach and four; where and at what date was the lawsuit by Mr. Bartleet against Isaac Axford; did he succeed, and if not, why; was Mr. Bartleet living, and if so, where?

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

These questions were assuredly very much to the point, and most of them remain unanswered to this day.

The story, however, was carried a step further by another correspondent of the invaluable *Monthly Magazine*, to which periodical, indeed, it afforded copy of most remunerative character. The September number was a good investment for the subscription, and provided matter of much relish to connoisseurs in such fare. From this correspondent we learn that Isaac Axford never cohabited with Hannah Lightfoot, but that she was taken away from the church door the day they were married, and that Isaac never saw her again. The reprobate Prince, he says, had frequently seen Hannah at the shop door in St. James's Market "as he drove by going to and from Parliament." He confirmed the information that the accommodating Perryn of Knightsbridge left Hannah £40 a year, and added that Isaac presented a petition on his knees to the King in the park, praying that Hannah be restored to him, "but obtained but little redress."

We get little further light from this correspondent, but may be thankful, perhaps, for the church which he brings into the story. But there is still no explanation of Isaac's unreasonable conduct in finding a grievance at being asked to carry out his part of the bargain after pouching the Prince's money. In October, however, there was distinct progress. In the magazine for that

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

month "An Inquirer" supplied some important information, which must be given in full.

"Hannah Lightfoot, when residing with her father and mother, was frequently seen by the King when he drove by going to and from Parliament House. She eloped in 1754, and was married to Isaac Axford at Keith's chapel, which my father discovered about three weeks after, and none of her family have seen her since, though her mother had a letter or two from her, but died at last of grief. There were many fabulous stories about her, but my aunt, the mother of Hannah Lightfoot, could never trace any to be true."

"The above," explains "Inquirer," "is a copy of a cousin of Hannah Lightfoot's letter to me on inquiry of particulars of this mysterious affair, and who is now living and more likely to know the particulars than any one else. The general belief of her friends was that she was taken into keeping by Prince George directly after her marriage to Axford, but never lived with him." "Inquirer" then adds some information of her own.

"I have lately seen a half-pay cavalry officer from India who knew a gentleman of the name of Dalton who married a daughter of Hannah Lightfoot by the King, but who is dead, leaving several accomplished daughters, who, with the father, are coming to England. These daughters are secluded from society like nuns, but no pains spared in their education. Probably on the arrival of this gentleman more light will be thrown on the

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

subject than now exists. The person who wrote the above letter is distantly related to me, and my mother, deceased some years, was related to Hannah Lightfoot and well knew her. I never heard her say any more than I have described already, except that she was short of stature and very pretty."

Here, at last, we have a date and place for the marriage. Axford married Hannah at Keith's chapel in 1754, it seems, and Prince George took charge of her immediately afterwards. It is enough to shake one's faith in human nature. The young reprobate whom we thought of as learning hymns, oiling locks and watching pendulums at Carlton House at the tender age of fifteen was all the while maturing a plan for abducting another man's wife, a plan which he carried out with such success and secrecy that the deed only came to light just sixty-seven years afterwards.

We are now arrived at October 1821, but the *Monthly Magazine* had not yet done with the subject, and nearly a year later, in July of 1822, the wondrous tale was taken up by Mr. (or Mrs.) T. G. H., whose claim to speak with authority rested upon the fact that among his relatives were some "who had been Hannah's neighbours." T. G. H. himself remembered Wheeler's shop in St. James's Market, the open space which, before its demolition, included "a daily flesh market" and a poultry market, the first under cover, the last "an open, oblong space." The linendraper's

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

shop was the eastern corner house on the south side of this open poultry market, and abutted on a narrow lane, Market Lane, which ran down to Pall Mall at the back of the Opera House, its lower end, as far as Wheeler's shop, being later covered over and made into an arcade. Mr. Wheeler, it seems, did the chief part of his business with the farmers of the poultry market, for whom he was accustomed to keep on tap "a cask of good ale."

The pretty Quakeress who engaged the youthful fancy of Prince George is represented by this well informed correspondent as the daughter of the hospitable linendraper. "Miss Wheeler," says he, "owed much of her beauty, like the Gunnings, to her providential escape from the small-pox, and her admirers attending her between the shop and her place of worship, the Friends' Meeting House in St. Martin's Lane, rivalled that which attended those paragons when taking the air in the park or elsewhere."

We learn further that whenever royalty came to the Opera it came in chairs preceded by a few footmen, and followed by about a dozen Beef-eaters, and that it was accustomed to enter the Opera House by the back door in Market Lane. Wheeler's shop at the corner lay in the line of march, and on these occasions "all the linens were taken out of the eastern window," and Miss Wheeler was placed there instead of the towels and tablecloths, in order that she might see the

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

procession. The idea seems excellent, and the advertisement good. "The fame of her beauty," says T. G. H., "attracted the notice of the Prince;" but, as his royal highness could see her there in the flesh, that fame seems redundant in the circumstances.

There follows an account of the way in which the meeting of the lovers was effected, all in the approved style of the eighteenth century mystery. Those who have explored the by-ways of that century know it all so well, with its capital letters, blanks, dashes and asterisks. A convenient rascal, well known about the court as Jack M——, lived with his wife in Pall Mall, to whom the task of providing the Prince with the dainty Miss Wheeler was committed. This worthy, after a reconnoitering of the neighbourhood, proceeded to establish himself in a watchmaker's shop opposite Wheeler's, from which place of vantage he could watch that house unobserved. Here he discovered that a frequent visitor was a woman whom subsequent inquiries proved to be a confidante of Miss Wheeler's, by the name of H——. This Mrs. H—— was an old servant of the Wheelers', and had subsequently been in the employment of one Betts, a glass-cutter in Cockspur Street, by whom she had been discharged. One of Betts's apprentices, named H——, had married her, "she being a handsome woman"; and upon Jack M—— opening his business of procuring Miss Wheeler for the Prince, she readily consented to the plot,

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

"which her previous familiarity rendered easy." The Wheelers, it seems, allowed their daughter to go out with this woman, who arranged interviews between Miss Wheeler and the Prince, gradually removed the girl's clothes and trinkets, and planned the elopement, which duly took place, "and old Mrs. Wheeler never recovered from the shock; she descended to the grave with a broken heart," as well she might.

Jack M——, we are told, was handsomely rewarded, and it must be confessed his reward took a surprising form. One supposes he got a comfortable sum of money as well, but "one of his relatives was appointed teacher of English to Queen Charlotte, and another became a bishop." As for Mrs. H——, her share was £500, and her husband, thus enriched, joined another apprentice by the name of S——, and set up in Cockspur Street in the glass-cutting way, where they maintained a successful rivalry with the excellent and unoffending Betts, who was, in fact, the only respectable person mentioned in the business. Never was vice so triumphant, or suffering virtue so trampled on before.

"Such," concludes T. G. H., "is the history of this elopement, which I received from my mother's relations, who had peculiar means of knowing the facts, as also from a fellow-apprentice of H——'s, one Stock, who kept the Lion and Lamb at Lewisham." He adds that "it was generally supposed that the fair Quaker was kept at Lambeth, or some



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

other village on the south of the Thames, because Prince George was often seen to ride over Westminster Bridge. He, however, had heard that "she dwelt with a farmer at Knightsbridge, who supplied the royal family with asses' milk." He pointed out the fairly obvious fact that those who made the Prince encounter Hannah in passing to and from the Parliament House, could have no knowledge of the town and of the situation of her father's shop. He might have added that Prince George was seldom or never at "the Parliament House" before he came to the throne. T. G. H. explains the change of name by giving as his opinion that "Mrs. H——'s maiden name may have been Lightfoot, and that the Wheelers would naturally use that name in relating the story, which, perhaps, led to some confusion." It certainly did.

Phillips here intervenes with an editorial. "We give ready insertion to the above," he says, "but still rely on the communication from 'Warminsterensis,' which describes her as Wheeler's niece and the wife of Axford."

This was no doubt taken as a word of encouragement by that authority, who, as he justly claimed, had opened the subject in the *Monthly Magazine*, and was entitled to a further hearing. He now wrote as "W. H.," Warminster, but his final letter led to a distinct darkening of counsel. "It is certain," he says, "that the fair Quaker's name was Hannah Whitefoot, not Wheeler." He

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

knew Axford's niece, it seems, "and showed her only yesterday," the long and discursive speculations of T. G. H. That lady admitted the topographical accuracy of the site of the shop, and of the way the Prince got a vision of the girl on his frequent visits to the Opera House. She was married, however, to put a stop to these frequent visits, Axford having paid her attentions when he was shopman in Ludgate Hill. The pair lived together for a fortnight or three weeks, "when she was one day called out from dinner, put into a chaise and four, carried off, and Axford never saw her again. It was reported that the Prince had several children by her, one or two of whom became generals in the army. When Axford, many years later, married a second wife, and it was reported that Hannah was still living, "the late Lord Weymouth, on inquiry, asserted that she was not then living."

This prattling correspondence was even yet not complete. In December of 1822, another correspondent still, "Curiosus" of Clapham, obliged the public with a further communication. He remembered Axford the grocer at the corner of the Old Bailey, and had dealt with him nearly half-a-century. He was "a heavy, silent man, who would never communicate a word on the subject. The marriage had been arranged by an eminent surgeon of that day, and he doubted any living together of Hannah and her husband after the marriage. There were a few children" by the

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

Prince; "one was in the army, but never became a general officer." "Curiosus" then mentions a second Quaker lady who had a strong hold on the affections of the royal Adonis, "but the attempt was instantly and peremptorily discountenanced by the lady."

Here, then, at last ends the Lightfoot story, as it developed under the care of the industrious Phillips in his precious *Monthly Magazine* up to the year 1822, and the most superficial examination of the evidence adduced (always, be it noted, that of neighbours, or cousins or relatives at second or third hand) by these witnesses to the truth, who were inspired by the death of the old King to come forward and tell the editor all about it, reveals a most amazing specimen of the story of Cock and Bull. It will be seen that none of these people come forward under their own names, that few of them agree upon the name of the Quakeress, still less upon the more important question of marriage or no marriage, or date and place of the ceremony, if admitted. So far, indeed, as plausibility, still less proof, is concerned, the Lightfoot legend had not advanced in the least in December of 1822 from the original crude innuendo of the *Citizen* of nearly half-a-century earlier. It was destined, however, to enter upon another phase in connection with the miserable controversy which raged about the life and death of Queen Caroline, the unfortunate queen of King George the Fourth.

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

In 1824 was published a pamphlet entitled *An Historical Fragment relative to her late Majesty Queen Caroline*, which was printed anonymously, but the author of which offered to come forward in the event of his statements being challenged. The piece is a temperate defence of King George's ill-used queen, or at least one quite temperate in comparison with the heated polemics which were commonly employed in attacking or defending the character of that hapless lady. The author was manifestly well instructed in the events of the time, and was quite clearly in some sort of official relation to the late Queen. His mention of the Lightfoot story is only incidental, and he himself was obviously among the sceptics; but his remarks are of interest as showing that Queen Caroline was so convinced of its truth that she felt her own position was strongly affected by its consequences.

"The Queen at this time," says the author, "laboured under a very curious and, to me, unaccountable, species of delusion. She fancied herself in reality neither a queen nor a wife. She believed his present Majesty to have been actually married to Mrs. Fitzherbert, and she as fully believed his late Majesty to have been married to Miss Hannah Lightfoot, the beautiful Quakeress, previous to his marriage with Queen Charlotte; that a marriage between King George and Queen Charlotte was a second time solemnized at Kew under the colour of an evening's entertainment,

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

after the death of Miss Lightfoot; and as that lady did not die until after the births of the present King and H.R.H. the Duke of York, her Majesty really considered the Duke of Clarence the true heir to the throne. Her Majesty thought, also, that the knowledge of this circumstance by the ministers was the true cause of George the Fourth's retaining the Tory administration when he came into power."

The author of the *Fragment* proceeds to say that the Queen was so convinced of the marriage of Prince George and Hannah that she commissioned him to open inquiries, and it is interesting to learn that among the first of his instructions was a command from the Queen to approach a Mrs. Hancock, and ask that lady for any information she might be disposed to give, "as she had had the pleasure of being intimate with Miss Lightfoot." He did not, however, see his way to an interview with that lady, though he understood her to be "highly respectable." But he happened to know an intimate friend of hers, whom he induced to broach the subject of the alleged marriage to Mrs. Hancock, and to ask her for any particulars of its circumstances she felt disposed to supply. The answer was not at all promising. Mrs. Hancock refused all information to the ambassador, and contented herself with stating that "her documents were in her possession." This reply the author sent to Queen Caroline. He also sent to the same high quarter some information

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

obligingly communicated to him by a Sir W——. This was substantially the story of the *Monthly Magazine*, the arrangement of the details by Miss Chudleigh, the marriage at Keith's chapel to Axford, the spiriting away of the bride after the ceremony, Axford's second marriage to Miss Bartleet, and the marriage of a daughter of Hannah's to a Mr. Dalton of the East India Company Service in Bengal, where he died, leaving three daughters of his own.

As already stated, the author of this *Fragment* refuses to vouch for the story, and deprecates Queen Caroline's belief in it as a delusion, an attitude which increases one's respect for his acumen. His statements of the Queen's case, however, were apparently uncontradicted, for his name was not revealed, and from internal evidence it seems very probable that the *Fragment* was written by Queen Caroline's friend and champion, Alderman Wood. Wood was much derided by the King's party, but he was a responsible and straightforward man, twice Lord Mayor, and an energetic and fearless champion of what he considered the right. He acted as executor of the Duke of Kent, and was the first subject honoured with a title by Queen Victoria, who conferred a baronetcy upon him in the opening year of her reign.

The author of the *Fragment*, Wood or another, points out the remarkable absence of any information upon three important points in all the

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

Lightfoot stories. Hannah was never personally known or recognized by the public, unlike other ladies in the same relations with royalty of whom history is full; her residence, while alive, was never known; and there was no record of her death, though there were vague rumours that she died of grief in the parish of St. James's, and was buried under a feigned name at Islington.

The *Historical Fragment*, as will have been seen, does not help the story forward one step, but among the concluding remarks of its author is one which merits particular attention in the light of developments which came later.

"I was also required," he writes, "to see the person who styles herself (whether justly or unjustly signifies little to the subject) Princess of Cumberland, to know if any of her real or presumed documents contained reference to that subject."

By the mention of this "Princess of Cumberland" we are introduced to a remarkable adventuress whose doings filled a great place in the public interest for some years following 1817. She was a woman of quite humble birth, but in that year she boldly declared herself to be of the blood royal, and she supported her pretensions for the next ten years with an energy which was only equalled by her impudence. Her connection with the Lightfoot story will duly appear after a short examination of her history, and it will be seen that in her hands the legend entered a final

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

phase in which it reached a most surprising development. Up to the time that the Princess of Cumberland proclaimed her august lineage, she was known to her acquaintance under the style of plain Mrs. Olivia Serres, the wife of Mr. John Thomas Serres, the marine painter, about whose birth and parentage there was not the least mystery in the world. All her friends knew that Olivia was the daughter of a house-painter of Warwick, Robert Wilmot by name, and that she was born in that town on the 3rd of April 1772, and baptized at St. Nicholas Church on the 15th of the same month. She had a bachelor uncle, the Reverend James Wilmot, a man of scholastic tastes and attainments, a Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and rector of Barton-on-the-Heath, Warwickshire. Much of Olivia's early life was spent with this uncle, but her father having later moved to London, she joined him there, and at the age of seventeen had made the acquaintance of her future husband by taking lessons in painting from him at her father's house. Serres then, and later, enjoyed a certain reputation in his calling, and a match was struck up between him and his pupil, whom he married on the 17th of September 1791, at her uncle's church at Barton-on-the-Heath. The bride being under age a special licence was necessary before her uncle could perform the ceremony, and Olivia's father, Robert Wilmot, in making application for this, swore by affidavit that he was her natural and lawful father.



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

The marriage was not a success, and Olivia and her husband separated in 1804, the unfortunate painter having been practically ruined by her extravagance. Olivia herself seems to have been an artist of a certain ability; she exhibited both at the Royal Academy and at the British Institution, and by some chance introduction to a member of the royal family, she was enabled to obtain the appointment of landscape painter to the Prince of Wales. This was in 1806, and the connection was one of which she made full use later.

Olivia's flighty character soon appeared. In 1809 she had the impudence to open a correspondence with the Prince of Wales, in which, while begging pecuniary assistance herself, she obligingly offered to lend his Royal Highness the sum of £20,000. She also turned her hand to other sorts of writing—poems, didactic essays like *Olivia's Letters to her Daughter*, and even theological dissertations such as *St. Athanasius's Creed Explained for the Advantage of Youth*. But she was not long contented with harmless exercises of this description. Her uncle, the rector, had died in 1808, and she began operations which proved later to be of a very wide-reaching nature, by attempting to make a mystery of the life of that excellent divine. In 1813 she published a *Memoir of James Wilmot, D.D.*, in which she represented him as a person of political and social importance, and as a proof of his intellectual and political accomplishments had no hesitation in attributing

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

to him the authorship of the *Letters of Junius*, a ridiculous claim which she later supported by evidence in handwriting which was obviously forged. But another claim she made in 1813 was her *chef d'œuvre*. In that year she presented a solemn petition to the King in which she claimed to be the daughter of Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, his Majesty's own brother. The petition was, of course, ignored, but upon the death of George the Third in 1820 she amplified her pretensions in a memorial addressed to his son, in which she assumed the title of Princess Olive of Cumberland. In order to support her claim, Mrs. Serres drove about in a hired carriage bearing the royal arms, placed her servants in the royal livery, and, to seal the matter, had herself rechristened at Islington Parish Church in September of 1821 as "Olive, daughter of the Duke of Cumberland and of Olive, his first wife."

This claim of Olivia's was only finally elaborated after a number of tentative pleadings, but it was eventually set forth and explained as follows, and was supported, as will be seen, by some amazing documentary evidence.

Dr. James Wilmot, it seems, while at Oxford, instead of the quiet student he appeared to the world, was a very human young fellow after all. Stanislas King of Poland happened to come to the city during his residence there, and the young fellow fell in love with his sister the Princess. He

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

was fortunate enough to gain the affection of this exalted lady, whom he married in circumstances of profound secrecy. Their union was blessed with a daughter, who was placed under the care of Dr. Wilmot's sister, a Mrs. Payne, grew up under her guardianship, and developed great personal attractions. At the age of eighteen this young lady enlisted the sighs of two no less highly placed lovers than the Duke of Cumberland and the Earl of Warwick. Lord Warwick, however, very loyally withdrew in the presence of the greater pretensions of the Duke, and very chivalrously did all he could to forward the interest of that potentate with the young lady. This seems to have prospered, for the pair were duly married at Lord Archer's house in London on March the 4th, 1767, the Reverend James Addez, D.D., officiating. Of this marriage, affirmed Olivia, she was the daughter. Ten days after her birth, however, she was substituted for a still-born daughter of Robert Wilmot, the house-painter at Warwick, whose reputed daughter she thenceforth became. As a fact, she said, she had the blood of two royal families in her veins. Her grandmother was the sister of the King of Poland, and her father the brother of his Majesty King George the Third, while the eminent divine of Barton-on-the-Heath, scholar, Fellow of Trinity, Oxon., and bachelor, was no bachelor at all, but her own unworthy grandpapa.

This enterprising lady was arrested for debt in

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

1821, and it then occurred to her to resist the proceedings on the plea of her royal blood, which, if admitted, would protect her from arrest in civil cases. In the course of these proceedings she produced what purported to be an early will of George the Third, witnessed by the Earl of Chatham and by Dunning the law lord, and bequeathing £15,000 to "Olive, the daughter of our brother of Cumberland." This will she endeavoured to get before the King's Proctor, but the court held it had no jurisdiction. Like many other impostors, however, Olivia succeeded in getting reputable people to interest themselves in her cause. Among these was Sir Gerald Noel, who in 1823 presented a petition to Parliament from the "Princess of Cumberland," and moved for a committee of inquiry. The motion was seconded by Joseph Hume, but Sir Robert Peel described Mrs. Serres's claim as baseless, and the motion was negatived without a division. Olivia's husband, the marine painter, died in the King's Bench Prison in 1825, and in his will took occasion to repudiate his wife's claims as preposterous. Olivia spent the rest of her days in difficulties, and herself died in the same prison in 1834.

Such, then, were the credentials of the lady who, as it appears from the remark of the author of the *Historical Fragment*, had some connection, occult or other, with the Lightfoot story. This connection, indeed, appeared abundantly in the annals of the year 1832, when was published that

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

extraordinary and scandalous series of libels entitled *Authentic Records of the Court of England*, which appeared under the auspices of J. Phillips, 334, Strand. The authorship of these libels was for some time attributed to Lady Anne Hamilton, the Lady in Waiting to Queen Caroline, which, however, that lady strenuously denied. They have since been traced to the door of Mrs. Serres, and are now accepted as from her hand, either wholly or in part. The character of this production may be estimated by the contents set out in the preface. These include such headings as "The Bigamy of George the Third"; "The Unaccountable Death of King George the Third's eldest Brother"; "The Infamous and Cold-blooded Murders of Princess Charlotte and Caroline Queen of England." It was in company such as this, and under the auspices of the woman the bare outline of whose career we have given, that the Lightfoot story was revived in 1832.

That story now assumed a lurid glow before which the relatively harmless prattle of the *Monthly Magazine* paled. According to Olivia, Prince George, smitten by the charms of the Quakeress, made no attempt to conceal his pains, but feeling that his happiness depended "upon receiving that lady in marriage, sounded every individual in his immediate circle, or 'on the list of the Privy Council, to ascertain who was most to be trusted to bring it about." He at last con-

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

fided his aspirations to his brother, the Duke of York, and to "another person." In the presence of these two he was married at Curzon Street Chapel, Mayfair, in 1759, and the marriage, says the authoress, "was productive of issue." After his accession in 1760 the young King took his ministers into his confidence, made a clean breast of his proceedings, and received the comfortable assurance "that no cognizance should be taken at any time upon his late unfortunate amour and marriage." He was recommended, however, to enter into another alliance without loss of time, advice which, as we know, resulted in the arrival of the Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg Strelitz, and the wedding at St. James's on the 18th of September 1761. "His Majesty's brother Edward, who was present at the marriage with the Quakeress, was now also present, and did certainly use his every endeavour to support the King through this trying ordeal," is Mrs. Serres's comment on that ceremony.

The Earl of Abercorn and Lord Harcourt, however, found it necessary to inform the young Queen of the existence of her husband's other wife, and advised her "to inform herself on the policy of the Kingdoms," in order to be sure "that her issue might uninterruptedly possess the throne." George and Charlotte were thus both consumed with anxiety, "the first for love and remorse in not having avowed the only wife of his affections," the last because she feared that the

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

King was guilty of bigamy, "and that her progeny would be known to be illegitimate." Meanwhile, the ministers seized Hannah unknown to the King, spirited her away, gave a large sum to "a young gentleman named Axford" to marry her, but would give the King no hint of her whereabouts. Mrs. Serres's finest stroke, however, makes his Majesty fly for help to the austere Chatham, and that imperious figure is represented as prowling about London in disguise, searching in vain for George's lost love. After this, we are not surprised at anything. What more natural than that Queen Charlotte should think all would be right if she were married a second time to her husband? So our old friend Dr. Wilmot is trotted out again, and composes the Queen's fears by uniting her a second time to the gay George at Kew Palace in the presence of the faithful Duke of York. In all the circumstances set forth by Mrs. Serres, it is highly probable that the King had but a heavy time with Queen Charlotte, and one is disposed to agree with her when she suggests that the King's first mental illness was due to the situation in which he found himself. "During these lapses of memory," concludes Olivia, "he was most passionate in his requests that the wife of his choice should be brought to him."

Such was Olivia's contribution to the Lightfoot tradition, obviously a concoction of the story as set forth in the *Monthly Magazine*, to which, possibly, Olivia herself was a chief contributor, but

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

flavoured to meet the tastes of the readers of the *Authentic Record*. It is, perhaps, not surprising to find that even such a tale as this was found good enough for another journalistic enterprise. Upon the republication of the precious "Record," in 1841, with some amendments, it provided much lucrative copy for the industrious journalist, Cyrus Redding, who in the *New Monthly Magazine* managed to continue undimmed the glories of the older periodical, whose pages we have had to consult at such length. Redding published his recollections of an interview with William Beckford, the author of *Vathek*, potentate of Fonthill, and son of Alderman Beckford, the friend and supporter of the great Chatham, and the champion of liberty against the tyranny of King George.

One's faith in Beckford's acumen, however, is shaken at the outset, when he declared to Redding his belief that Dr. Wilmot was the author of the *Letters of Junius*. "No one had better opportunities," he said; "he was a good scholar, a most intimate friend of Lord Chatham, and enjoyed the most exclusive confidence of George the Third for consenting to marry him to Miss Lightfoot in 1759 at Kew Chapel, William Pitt and Anne Taylor being the parties witnessing, and, for aught I know, that document is still in existence." It is more than doubtful whether "that document" was in existence at the time of the alleged interview with Redding, but it was duly forthcoming when



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

it was wanted, and we shall later be able to examine it, and quote the opinion of a court of justice on its value and origin.

As already indicated, Olivia's unquiet spirit at length found rest in St. James's churchyard, but her claim was by no means ended with the closing of her tomb. She left a daughter endowed with a plentiful measure of her own energy and truculence, Lavinia Janetta Hortense de Serres. This lady, like her mother, married an artist, Mr. Antony Thomas Ryves, whom she divorced, and whose name she dispensed with, and, upon her mother's death, she assumed the style and title "Princess Lavinia of Cumberland, and Duchess of Lancaster." Like her mother, again, the Princess Lavinia was fortunate enough to find the support of the amiable Sir Gerald Noel. They filed a bill in 1844 against the Duke of Wellington, as executor of the will of King George the Fourth, for an account of the £15,000 which her mother claimed under the alleged will of George the Third. Lavinia and her adviser had no luck in the courts, but, still undaunted, she in 1858 published "An appeal to Royalty, a letter addressed to her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, from Lavinia, Princess of Cumberland and Duchess of Lancaster."

In this piece, the Lightfoot legend attained its zenith, and the reason for the adoption of the venerable lie by the interesting Olivia and Lavinia is at last made clear. Among a great many other

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

documents of equal value set out in the Appeal is the following—

“George R. Whereas it is our royal command that the birth of Olive the Duke of Cumberland’s daughter is never made known to the nation during our reign, but from a sense of religious duty we will that she be acknowledged by the royal family after our death, should she survive ourselves, in return for confidential service rendered ourselves by Dr. Wilmot in the year 1759.

“(Signed) CHATHAM.

“WARWICK.

“KEW PALACE, *May 2nd*, 1773.

“Endorsed—London, 1815.

“Delivered to Mrs. Olive Serres  
by WARWICK.

“Witness—EDWARD (*i.e.* the Duke  
of Kent).”

The confidential service rendered by Dr. Wilmot is also explained; his help, indeed, seems to have been invaluable, for he was obliging enough to marry George and Hannah twice over in the same year. The Appeal contains what purport to be two certificates of the marriages; the first is represented as having taken place at “Kew Chapel” on the 17th April 1759, and is signed “George P.” and “Hannah”; the second “at their residence at Peckham” on 27th May, 1759, the parties then signing as “George Guelph, and Hannah Lightfoot.” “J. Wilmot” professes to have been the officiating priest at both ceremonies, and both

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

documents are signed by "William Pitt" and "Anne Taylor," as witnesses.

Lastly there is a cry from the suffering Hannah herself.

"HAMPSTEAD, *July 7th, 1768.*

"Provided I depart this life, I recommend my two sons and my daughter to the kind protection of their royal father, my husband, his Majesty George the Third, bequeathing whatever property I may die possessed of to such dear offspring of my ill-fated marriage. In case of the death of each of my children, I give and bequeath to Olive Wilmot, the daughter of my best friend, Dr. Wilmot, whatever property I am entitled to, or possessed of at the time of my death. Amen.

"(Signed) HANNAH REGINA.

"Witness—J. DUNNING.

"WILLIAM PITT."

The Appeal, as might be expected, failed altogether to move Queen Victoria, but, by a great stroke of luck for all parties, the Declaration of Legitimacy Act of 1861 enabled the indefatigable Lavinia at last to bring her case into a court of law. In 1866 she petitioned the court to declare that the Duke of Cumberland and Olive Wilmot were lawfully married, and that Olive Serres was their legitimate daughter. In order to establish her case, Lavinia produced some seventy documents, including those set out above. But before Sir Roundell Palmer, the late Lord Selborne, had finished his address for the Crown, the jury stopped the case, and declared the whole batch to be "impudent forgeries."



*After a drawing from*

*W. B. Sharp, Esq.*

(GEORGE) THE THIRD,  
King of Great Britain, &c. &c.



## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

After the exposure encountered by the Light-foot tradition in the course of these proceedings, it would seem superfluous to refer further to a bubble so effectually pricked. It will be recalled that during a career of nearly a century this amazing and impudent libel had been justified by no shred of documentary evidence upon which the slightest reliance could be placed; that all its anonymous propagators were disagreed upon such essential points as dates, names, and the nature of the connection between the Prince and his victim, or the place or places where it was established. The story, indeed, was obviously nothing but a vulgar scandal, promoted originally by a low-class journalist for his own purposes, and propagated by others of the same class in succeeding generations for similar ends. It was finally taken by a needy adventuress from the dirty pages in which it had grown and flourished, served up with improvements in the scurrilous *Authentic Records of the Court of England*, embodied in preposterous Appeals and Memorials, and put forward at last, supported by a whole series of unblushing forgeries in a court of law, where it was at once blown to atoms in 1866. At that point one would like to leave it, were it not that the interest excited by the proceedings of 1866 led to another remarkable revival of the story, and to some equally remarkable researches, which resulted in the discovery of the identity of some of the actors.

This new aspect of the matter arose from the

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

adoption of the story of Prince George's amour by a responsible man of letters. In 1866, Mr. John Heneage Jesse, who was already known as a reputable historian of the lighter side of the history of the eighteenth century, published his *History of the Court of George the Third*. In this work he accepted the King's youthful intrigue as authentic; he wrote of it as "the early and notorious passion," and set out at length in his pages the version of the *Monthly Magazine*, with a few variations. While admitting that the *Secret History* was "spoiled by exaggerations," he gave it as his opinion that some of its statements were worthy of credence, and quoted Cyrus Redding's babbling account of his interview years previously with William Beckford in support of that opinion.

This endorsement of the story by a man of Jesse's standing raised the legend to a higher plane of discussion than it had hitherto occupied, and produced, also, a new class of sceptics, historical students and antiquaries, who are apt to require chapter and verse for statements confidently made by historical authors. At the head of these critics was the erudite Mr. Thoms, the founder of that valuable periodical, *Notes and Queries*; and in that paper, accordingly, as also in the staid pages of the *Athenæum*, the contest raged afresh.

It is unnecessary here to follow the details of the fight; to show how Thoms tore the pitiful story, as we have related it, to pieces; to see him, with

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

great solemnity, tracing the movements of Lord Chatham on particular dates to prove that he could not have been engaged in witnessing bigamous marriages of his sovereign, and quoting King George's own letters with the same object. On the other hand, Jesse stood gallantly to his guns, and set himself to collect further evidence in support of his own view. The result of his researches duly appeared in the *Athenæum* of June the 15th, 1867, and it must be confessed that at first sight it appeared that he had completely vanquished Mr. Thoms. It is true Mr. Jesse had to rely, like some of his predecessors, upon the evidence of two cousins once removed of Hannah Lightfoot, whom he was fortunate enough to discover, but he succeeded in establishing the identity of that long-suffering damsel beyond any doubt whatever. He not only discovered a certificate of her birth, but triumphantly set out in the *Athenæum* a copy of the certificate of her marriage to Isaac Axford, a document so important that it seems to claim a place here.

"This is to certify that in the registers of marriages solemnized at Mayfair Chapel, which registers are preserved in the vestry of St. George's Parish, Hanover Square, there appears under date of 11th of December 1753, the following entry—

"Isaac Axford, of St. Martin's, Ludgate, and Hannah Lightfoot, of St. James's, Westminster."



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

"As witness my hand this 11th day of June, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven.

"JAMES MACREADY,  
"Curate of St. George's, Hanover Square."

Thus did Mr. Jesse establish at last the identity of the mysterious Quakeress, that of Isaac Axford, and the marriage of the pair in 1753. He establishes also the fact that Hannah was twenty-three years of age at the time of her alleged abduction, and that her royal lover, if such, indeed, George were, was fifteen when he committed the supposed atrocity.

The news of Mr. Jesse's discovery was none the less a blow for Mr. Thoms, but that gentleman as a painful searcher after the truth allowed no personal disappointment of his own to divert him from his pursuit. With the fresh clues thus afforded, indeed, he set about some researches of his own, and was rewarded with some very interesting results. The first of these established the fact that Isaac Axford, then described as a widower, married Mary Bartleet at Warminster on the 3rd of December 1759. But Mr. Thoms's most interesting discovery concerned Hannah Lightfoot herself. He was so fortunate as to obtain the assistance of the custodian of the records of the Society of Friends at Westminster, among which is preserved a report of some proceedings directly concerned with the conduct of that mysterious young woman. The Friends who

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

attended the quarterly meeting of the Society, held on the 1st of January 1755, were informed that Hannah had broken the rules of their order by marrying one not of their Society, by allowing herself to be married by a priest, and finally, as was understood "from current rumour," by absconding from her husband. The meeting thereupon appointed a committee, whose names are given, to make inquiries. In September they reported that they "were informed by her mother that she was married by a priest, but that they were not fully satisfied that she was separated from her husband." They continued their inquiries, but could never get sight of the elusive lady, "nor hear where she can be spoke with." Finally, on the 5th of March 1756, the Society issued its ban of excommunication in the following terms—

"Whereas Hannah Lightfoot, a person educated under our own profession, and who for several years past resided within the compass of this meeting, did then enter into a state of marriage by the priest with one not of our order, which is directly repugnant to the good rules and orders well known to be established among us; we therefore being desirous, as much as in us lies, to clear the truth which we profess and ourselves from any aspersions which through the misconduct of the said Hannah Lightfoot may be cast upon Friends, do hereby testify against such her proceedings as aforesaid, and dismiss her for the same as one with whom we can have no fellowship, until, from a penitent mind and a true contrition of heart, she

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

shall be induced to signify her unfeigned sorrow for her offence; and that this may be her case is what we must truly desire."

Here, then, at last, more than a hundred years after the fame of her beauty brought her name upon men's lips for a brief period, comes to light through the controversies of two men of letters all that is known of Hannah Lightfoot. We know now that she was married at the age of three-and-twenty, that her husband remarried six years later, and that she was dismissed from the Society of Friends. Those are the facts of her history about which there can be no doubt, the rumour that she had separated from her husband in 1756 the Friends failed to confirm, and they were content to dismiss her from their Society by a decree which, with all its pious severity, yet closes with something like a benediction. It is unnecessary to labour the obvious point that all that had been written about her doings and her connection with King George for a century was the mere surmise of scandal, which is as applicable to the King as it is to the equator. She may have been abducted, or she may have deserted her husband, but the fact that Axford married again within less than six years, at a time when bigamy was a capital offence, is strong presumption that he was then convinced of her death. The evidence, if such it can be called, which would connect the names of Prince George and Hannah Lightfoot would fail to convict a Rochester or a Casanova of the

## THE ELUSIVE QUAKERESS

commonest intrigue; still less, surely, will it brand as adulterer or bigamist a shy and awkward boy of fifteen whose youth was watched over by the most careful of mothers and the most jealous of politicians; a prince, moreover, who, when at last he emerged as King of England, became, as the husband of Queen Charlotte, a pattern of domestic virtue.

As to Hannah Lightfoot, it would seem that she has disappeared again into the darkness, without leaving a clue by which one can even guess at her destiny. There is, however, just a possibility that some light may eventually be thrown upon her history from a source which is indicated in that monumental bibliography of works relating to the Society of Friends published by Mr. Joseph Smith in 1867. In the supplement to that work appears the following reference to a manuscript, the resting-place of which, however, is not given: "Biographical notice of Hannah Lightfoot," by Joseph Smith.

In conclusion, it may be mentioned that it is possible the features of this mysterious girl have been preserved in a contemporary portrait. During the interest excited by the controversy between Mr. Thomas and Mr. Jesse it was stated that her portrait, by Reynolds or Gainsborough, was in the possession of the Sackville family at Knole. In reply to an inquiry by Mr. Jesse in 1867, Lord De la Warr, who then owned the picture, wrote as follows—

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

"In the general catalogue of the pictures at Knole the portrait in question is designated as being that of 'Mrs. Axford, the fair Quakeress,' by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and in a private list of pictures, bought by the third Duke of Dorset, this picture is found with the description above. Beyond this, the Dorset family have no history of the picture."

### III

## A ROYAL ROMANCE



### III

## A ROYAL ROMANCE

As old King George the Second was taking the air in Kensington Gardens one fine summer morning in 1750, a little girl of some five years, who was walking with her sisters and the Swiss nurse, broke away from the party, skipped up to the King, dropped a curtsy, and greeted him with the remark, "*Comment vous portez-vous, M. le roi? Vous avez une grande et belle maison, n'est-ce pas?*" The old King, familiar, and perhaps bored, with the pomp and etiquette of his usual relations with his subjects, was pleased beyond measure at the originality of this introduction. He took notice of the child, often had her to visit him at the palace afterwards, even romped with her, and put her in a large china jar, where, instead of showing fright, she sang *Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre* at him from under the lid. The little lady was Lady Sarah Lennox; and as daughter of the Duke of Richmond, a great officer of the court, she and her sisters had the privilege of being in the gardens to see the royal promenade. It was the prettiest entrance



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

imaginable into the great world where this young lady was destined for a time to play a great part. Ten or a dozen years later all fashionable London was agog with excitement, wrote letters, reported every movement and every rumour of Lady Sarah, for it was the question of 1761 whether she was or was not to become Queen of England.

Any one who reads much in the annals of the picturesque eighteenth century cannot fail to be struck with the smallness of the English society which controlled matters in those days. You may take the account of their times by any of the recording angels of that period—from Hervey, who sneered at most of what he saw at the court of George the Second; to Wraxall, who copied some of his false entries in the *King's Bench*—and find that the doings of a few well-born families provided them all with the bulk of the diverting gossip. It was essentially the few great names. A Walpole, a Pelham perhaps, two Pitts, and two were the great figures in politics during the reigns of three Georges. The members and connections of a few other great families rang the changes for a century on all the public offices and sinecures—from the Court to the Custom House. The army and the navy were officered from the same class, and it was only in the higher walks of the law that the outsider got a chance. Even the law came to be the happy hunting-ground of a few energetic Scotsmen like Murray and Wedder-

## A ROYAL ROMANCE

burn and Erskine, who got most of its prizes. Fashionable and official England, in fact, was a small coterie, whose members were known to each other personally, and were connected by ties of marriage or relationship or interest, which bound the whole body into a compact homogeneous mass. The men were to be found within the limits of two or three clubs—White's almost alone during the early part of the century, and with Almack's or Brooks's, and perhaps Boodle's, during the second half. The wives and daughters of these men were the great ladies of society, who lived and died in a few great country houses and a few great town mansions, danced and flirted at Ranelagh and Vauxhall, and went to court when they were young, and to Bath when age and rheumatism overtook them. Half-a-dozen great portrait painters, with Reynolds and Gainsborough and others at their head, painted the England of the eighteenth century—or, at any rate, the part of it which men counted.

They of which the little lady whose youth we recognise as the youngest daughter but one was of the very pick of this restricted society. Her father, the second Duke of Richmond, a seigneur of the very highest *ton*, stood close to royalty itself. Whenever the King went over to Hanover, either to make love to his numerous lady friends in that kingdom, or to fight valiantly, and shake his fist in the enemy's face, as he did at Dettingen, the Crown was put in commission, of

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

which the duke was a member. His duchess was a Cadogan, and his own high rank and the promise and abilities of his son made the family of Lennox one of the very highest consideration in the kingdom.

There was another family which by its energy and ability had established itself firmly in the small world of which we write. From the time that old Sir Stephen Fox, a strange compound of integrity and suppleness, founded the family fortunes at the court of Charles the Second, until the genius of the race burnt out with the life of Charles James Fox in 1806, one or other of the Foxes had contrived to keep himself before the very face and eyes of the country. The representative of the family at the time we are dealing with was the son of the second marriage and of the old age of Sir Stephen, Henry—or, as he was known at White's and the House of Commons, Harry Fox. A year or two before little Lennox was born, the Lennox and Fox families had become allied by marriage. The Lennoxes supplied the breeding, and the Foxes the ability which appeared in such splendor in the person of Charles James Fox in the next generation. We know so much now, but the marriage at the time was considered a *mésalliance* of the most heartless and hopeless kind.

It was in 1744 that Harry Fox—a prominent man in the debates, it is true, and a brother of Lord Ilchester, but still a younger son—dared to

## A ROYAL ROMANCE

run away and conclude a secret marriage with Lady Georgina Caroline, eldest daughter of the Duke of Richmond. It was a marriage of defiance. The duke and duchess knew of the attachment, and had provided another match for the young lady. The young lady, with much spirit, shaved off her eyebrows to make herself unpresentable to the new swain. Mr. Fox pressed his suit all the harder, got a special licence, and prevailed upon the young lady to accompany him to the house of his friend Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, and fashionable and official London was convulsed when news of the match came out.

Fashionable and official London was mostly at the opera on the evening of May 4, 1744, when the news fell. Amongst others, Sir Charles was there, and he wrote and told Harry all about it next day. "From the box where I was," he wrote, "I saw the news of your match run along the front box like fire in a train of gunpowder."

And men had been pretty to see. Instead of listening to the dulcet tones of the Frasi who was warbling at the spotlights to an accompaniment of ogle from the youth of White's in the stage boxes, the ladies leant round the partitions of the front row, and passed the news behind their fans: "The rage of the duke and his duchess was very high," they whispered. "They had put off the great ball fixed for the morrow, and had gone off to Goodwood." His grace had written to Mr. Pelham, the Secretary of State, that Miss Pelham

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

and Lady Lucy Clinton must not visit the offending couple.

The house at once resolved itself into two factions, and dear pleasant young Mr. Horace Walpole, who was thoroughly at home in such a matter, hearing of the ducal ban on all visitors to the daughter, went straightway to Williams's box, and begged to know the earliest moment that he might be allowed to pay his respects to that lady.

Never was such a hubbub in town. They discussed the match at tea-tables and in drawing-rooms, and the story of the loves of Henry and Caroline was the one subject of conversation and dispute. All London wrote to the duke and duchess with condolences "at ye unhappy affair" with assurances of its own innocence of participation in the plot; and mostly with indifferent success. Mr. Pelham wrote; Lord Ilchester, Harry's own brother, wrote; Lord Lincoln wrote an almost tearful letter. The Duke of Marlborough, who gave the bride away, was much blamed; and Williams, who provided the house and the parson, was held up to execration. The Dukes of Grafton and Devonshire had a warm dispute at White's about it, "the former a-tearing the whole to pieces, the latter defending it." The pother even spread to the palace, where "Blood Royal had the greatest weight" against Harry Fox and his bride.

Some of the cooler heads refused to take the matter so seriously. There was bluff old Sir

## A ROYAL ROMANCE

Robert Walpole, now Lord Orford, who "couldn't understand that the nation was undone because Lady Caroline Lennox was married to Mr. Fox." Lord Carteret, too—the clever, cynical Carteret, about whom one imagines so much, and knows so little—"diverted himself with it." No wonder! He was walking through the anteroom at Kensington Palace, and saw the Duke of Newcastle and the Duke of Dorset in conference with prodigiously long faces. They called him to them, said they were talking about a most unfortunate affair, and that they should make no secret to him that they were greatly affected by it. "Upon this," says Carteret, "I thought our fleet or our armies were lost, or Mons betrayed into the hands of the French, and at last it came out that Harry Fox was married, which I knew before." Here, in the King's palace, were his Secretary of State and his President of the Council shaking their heads at this wonderful marriage, instead of attending to the business of the nation. It is not surprising to hear that the King was "violently angry."

We recall so much of Mr. Fox's family history because, as we shall see, he and Lady Caroline stood almost in relation of parents to the young lady who is the subject of this paper, when her own were removed by death a few years later. Mr. Fox, too, made great use of his experience in what was held at the time to be a most irregular and romantic affair when a much more irregular

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

and romantic alliance was the burning question of 1761. Meanwhile it is pleasant to read that he and his wife were forgiven by the offended duke and duchess. The occasion was the birth of Henry Fox's firstborn, Stephen; and the pardon was conveyed in as quaint and touching a letter as was ever written. "Wee long to see your dear innocent Child," wrote the duke and duchess, "and that has not a little contributed to our present tenderness for you." So the offending pair were received back into favour, and the alliance of the Foxes and the Lennoxes was at last acknowledged and confirmed.

It must have been very shortly after we saw little Lady Sarah present herself to George the Second in the garden that she was left an orphan by the death of her mother the duchess. There was a family council in 1751, no doubt, where it was decided that she and her little sister Cecilia should live out their childhood with their married sister, Lady Kildare, in Ireland. So they and their nurses and their dolls were packed off by the coach, and made the long journey by the old road to Chester and Holyhead, perhaps returning with my lady to Carton after the season of 1751. For eight years, at Carton, Lady Sarah breathed the soft air of the Kildare plains, and perhaps acquired the wondrous beauty of complexion which was one of her charms when she came back to London a tall girl of fourteen—the lustrous beauty of skin which you may see in the faces of

## A ROYAL ROMANCE

the women and children on those same plains to-day.

In 1758 Lady Sarah returned to London and to society, and to the care of Harry Fox and his wife at Holland House—as we say, a tall, beautiful, shy girl of fourteen. George the Second was nearing the end of his tether, but, possessed of a taste for a pretty face to the last, heard of the new young beauty, and expressed a wish to see her. He remembered the little girl of the gardens and the china jar, no doubt. So the tall shy girl is carried to the palace, and approaches the Presence—the Presence surrounded by its court and accompanied by its grandson, the Prince of Wales, a young man of ruddy countenance and straightforward manners, with a receding forehead but a manly firm jaw, both features indexes of some of the events which were destined to stand out in his long reign of sixty years. But poor Lady Sarah has lost all her early confidence in the presence of royalty; she stammers and blushes when his Majesty condescends to joke and poke fun at her; his Majesty is disappointed and says, “Pooh! she’s grown quite stupid,” and goes back to his whist with the Walmoden who pulls the chair from under him, and amuses him generally in a way he can understand. But the young Prince of Wales, like the rest of the town, is struck with the beauty of the blushing girl; and, free for a moment from the tutelage of his mother, the Dowager Princess, and his groom of the stole,



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

my Lord Bute, falls headlong in love with Lady Sarah.

The time was ripe for the appearance of another beauty. The incomparable Gunnings were just married, and the eldest, poor Maria, was dying of consumption at Croome. The young girl from Kildare succeeded these paragons and stepped into their place by common consent of the town. Mr. Reynolds painted her twice: first at the window of Holland House with a dove, with her cousin Lady Sue Strangways, and her nephew Mr. Charles James Fox, coming round the corner below. Later he painted her in the classic manner, sacrificing to the Graces. Both pictures are attractive enough, but for once we feel that Mr. Reynolds allowed the true beauty of his subject to escape him.

Of that beauty there can be no doubt. "Her beauty is not easily described," says Harry Fox, "otherwise than by saying she had the finest Complexion and most beautiful Hair and prettiest Person that ever was seen, with a sprightly and fine Air, a pretty Mouth and remarkably fine Teeth and excess of Bloom in her Cheeks, little Eyes, but this is not describing Her, for Her great Beauty was a peculiarity of Countenance, and made Her at the same time different from and prettier than any other Girl I ever saw." Fox may be thought partial to his sister-in-law, but Horace Walpole certainly was not. Yet Horace was thrown off his guard by the beauty of Lady Sarah. They played



Lady Sarah Lennox, with Lady Susan Strangways  
and Charles James Fox

From a Painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds

*(By permission of Henry Graves & Co)*



## A ROYAL ROMANCE

*Jane Shore* at Holland House, Lady Sarah in the title part; and Mr. Charles Fox and Lady Sue Strangways, and Charles's little brother Harry dressed up as a bishop. "Lady Sarah was in white," wrote Horace, "with her hair about her ears and on the ground, and no Magdalen by Correggio was half so lovely and expressive."

The town was in raptures, in fact, and all the young men were making sheeps' eyes at the beauty of sixteen. There was my Lord Carlisle; my Lord Errol, whom she refused; my Lord Newbottle, with whom she flirted desperately; Mr. Thomas Bunbury, whom she afterwards married; and no doubt a score of others whose names are not recorded. Last of all there was the Prince of Wales, now become George the Third of England, who was a willing victim. He saw Lady Sarah often. There was no flirtation here; the King was in deadly earnest. There was no stupid Royal Marriage Act in force; this the King, perhaps in the light of his own experience, thoughtfully provided for his relations when they began to marry into Horry Walpole's family. But at present, as we say, the King knew his own mind; and there is no doubt that, if Lady Sarah had known hers, she might have ascended the throne in 1761 as Queen of Great Britain and Ireland.

Horace Walpole accused Henry Fox of intriguing to bring the match about, and the remark is a proof of Horace's sagacity. Harry Fox was not loth to see his sister-in-law Queen of England, we

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

may be sure. Mr. Fox was the obedient, humble servant of the court at any time, and when, two years later, the court wanted some instrument to bring about the peace with France, they employed Mr. Fox, who did the business by means of a bribery which made that age, not at all nice in such matters, stare and gasp with wonder, or at least that portion of it which got none of the money.

Lady Sarah was often at court, and the King's flame burnt brighter every day. There were soft passages in the windows of the palace, and the King at least grew conspicuously amorous. But George, one imagines, was a clumsy lover—of the blundering, downright type. He talked so quickly that his words overran each other, spluttered a good deal, and poked his face very close to the person he was addressing. He may have frightened the young girl; there was certainly little response on her part.

Harry Fox was so interested in the progress of the affair that he left a detailed account among his papers of what we may consider its central incident. "On Thursday," says he, "Lady Susan [Strangways] was at Court with Ly Albemarle, Lady Sarah on the other side of the room with Ly Car. Fox." The young King went up to Lady Sue and asked her when she would return to town from Somersetshire, where he heard she was going. "'Not before winter, Sir,' said Lady Sue.

"'Would you like to see a Coronation?'

## A ROYAL ROMANCE

“‘Yes, Sir, I hope I should come to see that.’

“‘Won’t it be a much finer sight when there is a Queen?’

“‘To be sure, Sir.’

“‘I’ve had a great many applications from abroad, but I don’t like them,’ added his Majesty, ‘I have had none at home, I should like that better.’

“Lady Sue was frightened, and said nothing,” records Mr. Fox.

“‘What do you think of your friend, you know who I mean. Don’t you think her fittest?’

“‘Think, Sir?’ said the frightened girl.

“‘I think none so fitt,’ says the King.

He then went across the room to Lady Sarah, bade her ask her friend what he had been saying, and make her tell all. She assured him that she would.

“H.M. is not given to joke,” comments Mr. Fox, “and this would be a very bad joke too. Is it serious? Strange if it is, and a strange way of going about it.”

“The next Sunday sennight,” continues Mr. Fox, “Lady Sarah go’s to Court, out of humour and had been crying all the morning.” The fact is the poor girl was bewildered. The fascinating Newbottle, with whom she was flirting so hard, was too much in her mind to allow her to think of the greater matter which was in suspense.

“The moment the King saw her,” says Mr. Fox, “he go’s to her.

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

“‘Have you seen your friend lately?’ said he.

“‘Yes, Sir.’

“‘Has she told you what I said to her?’

“‘Yes, Sir.’

“‘What do you think of it? tell me, for my happiness depends upon it.’

“‘Nothing, Sir.’

“Upon which his Majesty turned upon his heel and exclaimed pettishly, ‘Nothing comes of nothing,’ and left the room.”

Shortly afterwards Lady Sarah went into Somersetshire, rode out, fell with her horse, and fractured her leg. The faithless Newbottle made some unfeeling remark when told of the accident, the faithful King was all solicitude for the suffering young beauty. He asked Conolly a hundred questions about her, and Mr. Fox was ready to reply to a hundred more. There had been a rumour that the King was about to marry a princess of Brunswick, and on a Sunday Mr. Fox satisfied himself that the rumour was without foundation. “On Monday, therefore, I went to Court,” he wrote in a memorandum addressed “to all whom it may concern.” He determined, he said, that the King should speak to him about “Lady Sal,” if he could bring it about. After “a few loose questions” the King supposed Fox by that time settled at Holland House. “Now I have you,” said Mr. Fox to himself, and replied to the King, “I never go there, Sir; there is nobody there.”

## A ROYAL ROMANCE

"Where then is Lady Caroline?"

"In Somersetshire, Sir, with Lady Sarah."

At the mention of the name the King's manner and countenance softened, we are told, and he coloured a little. Fox went on to describe the accident—the fall on the stony road, the horse struggling for a moment to get up, his shoulder grinding Lady Sarah's leg against the stones, the terrible pain in the coach before she got to Mr. Hoare's the surgeon. "The King drew up his breath, wreathed himself, and made the countenance of one feeling pain"; and Mr. Fox says to himself, "Thinks I you shall hear of that again." So he went on to say that she was "chearfull now and patient and good humoured to a degree," and so on, but worked back to the accident again with richer details than ever, and the King again sucked in his breath and changed countenance when Henry mentioned the great pain.

"Don't tell Lady Sarah," he wrote to his wife, "that I am sure that he intends to marry her, for I am not sure of it but I am sure that he loves her better than N[ewbottle] does." Wisdom was surely justified of her child when this paper appeared in Princess Lichtenstein's book to vindicate Mr. Walpole's remark that Harry Fox was intriguing to make his sister-in-law Queen of England. One is inclined, therefore, to believe Horace when he declares that, when Lady Sarah had recovered and come back to London, she watched for the King as he rode in from Kew—



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

made hay at him, in fact, in the grounds of Holland House "in a fancied habit." It may be; who shall blame her? The account of the King's solicitude lost none of its beauty in Fox's telling, we may be sure; and *l'affaire* Newbottle may have been ended by his unfeeling jest. The young girl at last, perhaps, knew her mind; but it was too late. There was more in the rumour of the Princess from Mecklenburg than Harry Fox thought. Others were interested in the King's evident penchant for Lady Sarah—Lord Bute, and the Princess Dowager, and the Privy Council. The conscientious young King submitted his own personal feelings to the advice of his Ministers. Colonel Grahame, who had been sent all over Europe to inspect the likely royal spinsters, reported favourably on Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and the royal romance was at an end.

It was all over; there was no doubt about it at all. The King summoned the Council to announce the marriage, and Lord Harcourt went over for the Princess, and the little self-possessed lady came across the Channel to Harwich, and was not sea-sick for above half-an-hour, but sang and played on the harpsichord nearly all the way. And when she got to England she was not dismayed by the greatness of the occasion or the splendour of the preparations; but she wondered a little at the number of ladies sent to meet her, and exclaimed, "*Mon Dieu, il y en a tant!*"

## A ROYAL ROMANCE

She turned pale and her lip trembled a little as they approached the palace. But when the Duchess of Hamilton, the younger of the incomparable Gunnings, smiled, she recovered herself and said, "My dear duchess, you may laugh—you who have been married twice, but it is no joke to me." One wonders how she knew so soon the history of Elizabeth Gunning, the "mother of dukes," and how much was told her of the kindness of the King for Lady Sarah.

Poor Lady Sarah! When all this became clear, she wrote the most human of letters to her friend and confidante, Lady Sue, that ever came from a disappointed lover. "To begin to astonish you as much as I was, I must tell you the [King] is going to be married to a Princess of Mecklenbourg and that I am sure of it. Does not your Chollar rise at hearing this. . . . I shall take care to shew that I am not mortified to anybody, but if it is true that one can vex anybody with a reserved cold . . . manner, he shall have it I promise him. . . . Luckily for me, I did not love him, only liked. . . . I did not cry I assure you. . . . The thing I am most angry at is looking so like a fool, having gone so often for nothing." And so on, and so forth; and Lady Sue is not to mention it to any one except her father and mother, Lord and Lady Ilchester, for it will be said that they invent "storries," and it might do the family a lot of harm and her no good.

Poor Lady Sarah!—and her troubles were not

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

over yet, either. The King selected her as one of the bridesmaids, "all beautiful figures," says Mr. Walpole, "but with neither features nor air, Lady Sarah was by far the chief angel." The marriage did not take place till ten at night. There was the Princess in a stomacher of surpassing richness, "her tiara of diamonds very pretty," and her violet mantle and ermine of prodigious heaviness. There were the pretty bridesmaids, with Lady Sarah at their head, all in a row; and the King had more eyes for Lady Sarah than for his bride all through the ceremony. When it was over, up comes my Lord Westmorland, the old Jacobite, who has hardly any eyes at all, mistakes Lady Sarah for the Queen, drops on one knee, and takes her hand to kiss it; Lady Sarah has to draw back with a blush, and cry, "I am not the Queen, sir," and George Selwyn utters that bitter jest: "You know, he always loved Pretenders." Did ever romance end in such embarrassment for a poor young girl of sixteen?

Now it was all over, Mr. Fox again took up his pen to assure "all whom it might concern" that there was not much in it, after all. When the Princess was really decided upon, "Lady Sal" met the King, it seems, and "answered short with dignity, and a cross look," exactly as she had promised in her letter to Lady Sue. "To many a girl," continues Mr. Fox sententiously, "H.M.'s behaviour has been very vexatious, but the sickness of her Sirrell immediately took up all her

## A ROYAL ROMANCE

attention, and when in spite of her nursing it dy'd, I believe it gave her more concern than H.M. ever did. That grief, however, soon gave way to the care of a little Hedge Hog that she sav'd from destruction in the field, and is now her favourite." O sly Mr. Fox, and happy Lady Sarah thus to be able to bury her griefs!

It was in the year following the King's marriage that Lady Sarah threw in her lot with one of her admirers, and became the wife of Sir Thomas Charles Bunbury, a young man of fashion of great personal attractions, a light of the Macaronies of Almack's and White's, and noted among sportsmen as the owner of Diomed, the winner of the first Derby. But the marriage was not a success. As was not seldom the case in the society of her day, a girlhood closed too abruptly by an early and ill-advised marriage was followed by a period of unhappiness and unrest. There was much scandal recorded in the memoirs of the time, in connection with Lady Sarah Bunbury's name, which we need not repeat here. Much of it is utterly unconvincing. But her short unhappy married life with Sir Charles came to an end with proceedings at Doctors' Commons and the House of Lords in 1776.

Lady Sarah really began her life only when, five years later, she became the second wife of the Honourable George Napier, the sixth son of the fourth lord. We have taken her early romance as the subject of this paper, and this second married

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

life does not concern us here, and yet it is the part of her career one would like best to dwell upon. It is fully recorded in Lady Sarah's own letters, published within recent years by the Countess of Ilchester, where may be read a pleasant story of great domestic happiness, and of the maternal care which went to the rearing of her sons the heroic Napiers—sons distinguished, amongst a crowd of distinguished contemporaries, in everything which makes the fame of soldiers and gentlemen. Fate was kinder to Lady Sarah in her age than in her youth. She lived to hear, from the great general of the Peninsular war himself, of the glory her sons were earning under his eye; and long before her death, in 1826, she must have been assured of the brilliant fulfilment of the promise of their youth, which is now a precious page of the history of their country. In the stirring times of the opening years of the nineteenth century, the romance and the unhappiness of Lady Sarah's youth were forgotten by most of her contemporaries. The years as they rolled on had brought cares and anxieties for George the Third in a measure greater than for most of his subjects. In his blundering, obstinate but honest way, the King bore a personal part in all the great events of his reign, so long as his reason remained with him. But he remembered his first love through them all. Years after his marriage with the Queen he turned to her in the royal box at the play when Mrs. Pope, who was reckoned like Lady Sarah, came on, and was heard to re-

## A ROYAL ROMANCE

mark, "She is very like Lady Sarah still." Years after this again, when George the Third was really dead to every sense that makes up human life, deaf, blind, bereft of reason, wandering through his palace and dreaming his old life over again, holding courts, reviewing troops, opening Parliaments, some who could remember the royal romance were reminded that it still lingered in the memory of its heroine. Dean Andrews of Canterbury preached a charity sermon at St. James's Church, in Piccadilly, for the benefit of an institution for the blind—founded, as he told his hearers, by his Majesty at the time his own sight began to fail. The Dean was eloquent, and George Tierney, the Whig leader, who was present, records that his eloquence was heightened by the remembrance of the pitiful condition of the King. Tierney noticed an elderly lady in the seat immediately in front of him, who wept much at the Dean's mention of the distresses of his Majesty. When the sermon was ended, servants came for this lady and led her out of the church, when it appeared that Lady Sarah Lennox was herself totally blind.

It might be interesting, but would certainly be unprofitable, to speculate upon what might have happened if English history had Lady Sarah Lennox become Queen of England. We all know the tremendous part played in the national fortunes by the personality of George the Third—a personality moulded, as time went on, by the troubles which beset him in his own family. Those

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

troubles, as many believe, had much of their origin in the negative virtues of Queen Charlotte, whose absolute devotion to the King left little place in her heart for his sons. We know, too, that Lady Sarah's sons were distinguished above their fellows in manliness and ability and bravery. But who shall say what might have been her influence on the King and the royal princes who might have been born to her, had her warm and loving nature shone upon the court, instead of the prim and cold personality of the Princess from Mecklenburg-Strelitz?

A MA~~ND~~ OF HONOUR





#### IV

### A MAID OF HONOUR

AMONG the first sitters of young Mr. Joshua Reynolds when he set up his easel in his native county of Devon, and began to paint the features of many of the nobility and gentry of the west country, was a young lady whose charms the young painter recorded with some enthusiasm in his note-book, and of whose person he made a very pleasing portrait. This young lady was twenty-three years of age, though she did not look it, and

During her attractions, including the "shape" which attracted Mr. Reynolds, were the chief part of her fortune. It is true that Miss Elizabeth Chudleigh had recently been appointed maid of honour to the Princess of Wales, but the five hundred a year attached to that office was as nothing compared with the wealth which was latent in her beauty, and of which she made afterwards the fullest use. That beauty, indeed, was such a possession that, combined with other qualities, it enabled this young woman to enter upon a career of which there is hardly a parallel on record. For self-assertion carried to a point of triumph which brought great means from the first, and, later,

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

enormous wealth; for dare-devil courage, which laughed at legal obstacle and stuck at nothing; for unblushing impudence in the concealment for years of faults which would have ruined any other woman, and enabled her to maintain her position in the first social circles of her day, it would be hard, indeed, to match the career of Mr. Joshua Reynolds's young sitter, Miss Elizabeth Chudleigh.

It is worthy of note, as will abundantly appear, that it was only during those few years of her early life in Devon that Miss Chudleigh's contemporaries could be sure of addressing her by her proper name. Her life was really a perpetual masquerade for well over thirty years. She masqueraded as a maid of honour long after she was a married woman and the mother of a son; she masqueraded as a duchess while she was the wife of an earl; and she masqueraded as a widow while her real husband was still alive. Enough faults were made upon the various false positions she occupied throughout her life, but she repented them and died at last in the possession of a great estate and with reputable people among her executors.

Elizabeth came of a good west country stock. There were Chudleighs stirring in most of the great events in those parts from the time of Elizabeth onward. A sailor Chudleigh was out with Drake against the Spaniards, and played a valiant part in delivering the country from the peril of the Armada; two other Chudleighs, Sir George and his son James, did notable service on the

## A MAID OF HONOUR

Parliamentary side during the Civil War, and, later, for the King, after certain unjust animadversions had been made on their defeat at Stratton Hill. A generation later produced a diplomatist Chudleigh, who has a sort of monument in ten volumes of state papers, which are occasionally consulted by hungry historians. Sir George's younger brother Thomas was also in the service, and, surviving the troublous times of the Revolution, was solaced during his declining years with the Lieutenant-Governorship of Chelsea Hospital, and there his daughter, the little Elizabeth, was born in the year 1725. The colonel died six years later, leaving his wife and child ill provided for. There was a small farm in the parish of Harford, Devon, which produced about a hundred a year, a little property which Elizabeth preserved during her life, and this scanty income seems to have been the chief resource of her widowed mother at the colonel's death. Upon that event Mrs. Chudleigh removed her little establishment to the west, and there Elizabeth grew up, and was painted by young Reynolds in 1743 as one of the belles of that pleasant country.

Had Elizabeth's future distinction been even guessed at in those early days, we should doubtless have had some particulars of her childhood; as it is, next to nothing is known of those years. As she grew up she showed promise of great beauty, which was later abundantly fulfilled, and it is known that she sustained an attack of small-

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

pox at the age of fifteen without suffering much loss of that beauty. Her first love affair took place at near the same time, and, from what we know of her subsequent history, she probably suffered as little from that. Perhaps the most important event of her early life was her accidental meeting with William Pulteney, afterwards Earl of Bath. That gentleman, the most strenuous of the opposition which year after year vainly assailed the position of Sir Robert Walpole, was among the most conspicuous of the political henchmen of Frederick Prince of Wales. Mr. Pulteney seems to have met Elizabeth at a shooting party in the west, and to have been attracted in a fatherly sort of way by the beautiful child. He good-naturedly sent her books, tried to improve her education, and entered into a correspondence with her on literary matters, from which, however, she seems to have profited little. According to one of her biographers, Elizabeth's natural vivacity stood in the way, and Pulteney's books and his disquisitions upon them were little to her taste. In her own words, she wished all she had to deal with to be "short, clear, and surprising," and prolix stories or voluminous authors bored her to death, as they have bored young girls of her age before and since. Pulteney probably obliged her most when he persuaded her mother to return to town, and to give the girl an entrance into the great world, in which her youth and beauty might have full scope. So the mother returned to Lon-

## A MAID OF HONOUR

don, took a house in a fashionable part of the town, and added to her resources by letting rooms. In 1743 Pulteney completed his benevolence by procuring Elizabeth the appointment as maid of honour to the Princess of Wales.

We see elsewhere that by this time Frederick Prince of Wales's relations with his royal father, though by no means ideal, had become less uncomfortable than in former years; they were at last on speaking terms, and, consequently, a post at his court had greater opportunities than formerly, and no longer carried with it the certainty of ostracism at St. James's. Elizabeth, therefore, as maid of honour to the Princess, was fairly launched in the great world, and entered upon its possibilities with the greatest spirit. We know little of the details of life at the Prince's court

During the manifestly hostile criticism of Lord Hinchinbrook and Horace Walpole, but one fact stands out from the gossip of the time which is entirely creditable to the Princess; even her husband's enemies combined to praise that royal lady, and it is safe to say that no credible word of scandal is recorded against Augusta Princess of Wales, even bearing in mind the inspired attacks against her which arose from the ascendancy of Lord Bute in the counsels of her son. It seems probable, therefore, that Elizabeth's frolics, of which there is an amazing record, were carried on unknown to her royal mistress at Carlton House. It is related with some humour that a prosperous coachman of

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

the Prince, dying in possession of a little fortune, left it all to his son on condition that he did not marry a maid of honour. What the date of that libellous testament may have been we know not, but we have a list of the other ladies who shared with Elizabeth the duties of attending the Princess, and it is but fair to say that the coachman's will was the only evidence against them. Of Miss Albina Selwyn, Lady Elizabeth Hamilton, Miss Lucy Boscawen and Miss Lawson, nothing but good and decorum is recorded; of Elizabeth herself there is another story altogether.

From the time of her first appearance at Frederick's court there is a tradition of the fascinating maid of honour's beauty, and of its potent effect upon the high-born youth of that day. Half the eligible young men about town were named as her suitors, the greater number, perhaps, without any authority; the constant ogling went on wherever Elizabeth appeared lending a certain plausibility to the rumours in the case of many, but there were others about whose vows there was no doubt at all. Of these last, which are said to have included Lord Howe, the Duke of Hamilton, a nobleman of the highest consideration but of tender age, was certainly the chief. His grace, in fact, was only just nineteen, and was about to start on the grand tour, when Miss Chudleigh encountered him and brought her batteries into action. There are no details of the wooing on record except that the duke, sensible of his youth and inexperience, very thoughtfully determined to

## A MAID OF HONOUR

finish his travels before definitely casting in his lot with Elizabeth. There seems, however, to have been a provisional engagement between the pair; the duke started for the continent with a promise to write to his mistress upon every available opportunity, and the omens were all reckoned favourable for a brilliant match for the maid of honour upon his grace's return. But, as a fact, their love-making was not destined to prosper.

Soon after his departure, Elizabeth, whose duties at court seem to have sat lightly upon her, and to have permitted of frequent vacations, went off to spend a great part of the summer with an aunt named Hanmer, who took her to stay with friends of her own, Mr. and Mrs. John Merrill, at their country house at Lainston in Hampshire. During this visit a party was made up for the Winchester race-meeting, and at the races Elizabeth attracted the notice of a young naval lieutenant of twenty years of age, Mr. Augustus John Hervey, who had obtained a day's leave of absence from his ship, the *Cornwall*, Vice-Admiral Davers's flagship, then lying at Portsmouth, but under orders for the West Indies. Mr. Hervey was a member of a very notable, if eccentric, family, that of the Earls of Bristol, and we have already made the acquaintance of his father, Lord Hervey, the husband of the beautiful Molly Lepel, and the confidential chamberlain of Queen Caroline, whose second son Augustus was. Hervey became later a very capable sailor, one of that crowd of



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

able captains, indeed, who carried out the great schemes of the elder Pitt, and helped to raise England to a position among the nations of Europe which she had never occupied before. But in spite of his ability he seems to have shared the family eccentricity to the full. It was Lady Mary Wortley Montagu who described mankind as composed of "men, women and Herveys," and people living in the great world during the middle years of the eighteenth century were probably inclined to agree with her distinction. It was no proof of his eccentricity, however, that Augustus should have fallen violently in love with Elizabeth, which from all accounts was the lot of most of the youth of that day who met her. There was, perhaps, less common sense in his determination to marry her offhand on the very eve of his setting for a lengthy cruise in the West Indies.

In this enterprise Hervey seems to have been very fortunate in the assistance he received from aunt Hanmer and her friends the Merrills. When later, Elizabeth's doings became so famous that all the details of her career were discussed with the greatest relish by the public, it was roundly stated that Mrs. Hanmer intercepted letters from the absent Duke of Hamilton and suppressed them in order to forward the suit of the new lover. That is a statement very difficult of proof, but there is no doubt that she favoured young Hervey's pretensions, and there is reason to believe that she was a connection of his family by marriage. In

## A MAID OF HONOUR

any case he found a most complaisant household at Lainston. Mr. Hervey's first step was to obtain a few days' leave of absence from his ship, during which he danced attendance upon Elizabeth at the Merrills'. There followed a necessarily short wooing, during which one supposes Hervey to have received ample encouragement from the lady, for the courtship, the marriage to which she consented, and the honeymoon, were all completed well within a week. It was determined to keep the match secret, for the excellent reason that Hervey had no means beyond his lieutenant's pay, and, in the circumstance, it would clearly have been flying in the face of Providence for Elizabeth to forfeit her five hundred a year from the Princess by acknowledging her change of condition.

The Merrills' place at Lainston was an ideal one for an enterprise of this romantic character. That gentleman's house was the only one in its parish, and possessed a church all to itself in his garden; Mr. Amis, the parson, was Mr. M.'s obedient, humble servant, and, as the lovers decided to be united at dead of night, it was quite easy to keep his small establishment of five servants in ignorance of the ceremony. Mrs. Hanmer and Elizabeth had brought a maid with them, a young woman of the name of Cradock, and to her was entrusted the task of guarding the rites from interruption by the other servants, and of the prevention of any suspicions of what was going forward, either before or after the cere-

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

mony; a task she seems to have performed with great ability. There were all the elements of romance about what followed. Mr. Hervey, as it afterwards appeared, was coming and going during the few days previous to the wedding, and occasionally obliged the ladies by taking them to Portsmouth and showing them his ship. One day in August 1744, a small party sat down to dinner at Mr. Merrill's, which included the parson, Mr. Amis, a Mr. Mountenay, and Mrs. Hanmer, and, of course, Elizabeth and Augustus. The weather was balmy, and the greengages ripe, as the maid Cradock, who had an inconvenient memory, recollected many years later. Shortly before eleven o'clock, Elizabeth and Augustus went out into the garden, as if to take the air, and were followed a few minutes later by the rest of the party, the excellent Cradock, meanwhile, being told off to keep the coast clear of the other servants, who were, however, mostly in bed. Augustus and Elizabeth walked straight to the church, and there awaited the others, who soon arrived, headed by the Reverend Mr. Amis. Mr. Mountenay cleverly provided the little light necessary to the ceremony by sticking a candle in his hat. With these poor substitutes for the pomp and ceremony usual on such joyful occasions, the fateful service was concluded as quickly as possible, and the wedding party returned with all composure to Mr. Merrill's hospitality. There was a honeymoon of two days, after which Hervey returned to his ship and sailed



Elizabeth Chudleigh, Countess of Bristol



## A MAID OF HONOUR

to the Indies, and Elizabeth resumed her place as the most ornamental of the maids of honour at the court of the Princess of Wales.

In some later troubles which we shall have to examine at length, Elizabeth was accused by Horace Walpole and others of having destroyed the record of this marriage in the Lainston register; but probably without any justification. It is, indeed, exceedingly doubtful whether such a document existed; Lainston was a derelict sort of parish, where the ministrations of the clergyman in any of the offices of his calling were seldom called upon, and births, marriages and deaths in a parish of one house were obviously events of rare occurrence. To serve her own purpose, the maid of honour would certainly have suppressed that or any other inconvenient evidence without scruple, but for the reasons stated there was, probably, no necessity for so heroic a course. Elizabeth later professed to believe that the ceremony, as performed at Lainston, was invalid from its incompleteness; it was such "a scrambling, shabby business," she said, that she was unwilling to take a positive oath that she was married at all.

In the light of what followed, it is difficult to understand Elizabeth's motives for entering into this mad alliance. One of her biographers, who appears to have been generally well informed, states explicitly that she was persuaded into the marriage by Mrs. Hanmer in face of her dislike of young Hervey, and only consented out of pique

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

at the supposed faithlessness of the Duke of Hamilton, whose letters her aunt had suppressed. But from Elizabeth's subsequent record one would judge her a difficult subject for persuasion of any sort. With her lately-acquired post at the Prince's court, which brought her relative affluence, and with the possibility at least of a great match with the Duke of Hamilton to fall back upon, there was surely no reason for her to rush into any marriage at all at the age of twenty-four. We are therefore inclined to look upon this folly as the result of the mutual passion of two young and thoughtless people, and to discredit the author's confident assertion that the lady resolved to have nothing further to do with her husband so soon as he should have sailed with Admiral Davers. It was a mysterious business altogether; but the one thing certain it is that Elizabeth returned to her mother's house in Conduit Street with no one the wiser for what had taken place at Lainston Church except the actual witnesses of the ceremony.

Hervey was away for over two years, and returned in October of 1746 to find his bride one of the most prominent figures in society. She received every attention from Frederick and the Princess, and was looked upon as the chief ornament of their court, where one reads of many little pleasantries in which she was a chief figure. At a supper party in the year of the '45, for example, Frederick had a model of Carlisle Castle made in sugar, and he and the maids of honour, with the

## A MAID OF HONOUR

Chudleigh at their head, bombarded the rebels in effigy, as it were, with sugar-plums; Frederick, in a sarcastic mood, even named her as Minister of War in a memorial he drew up and purposed to present to the King, in place of Mr. Pitt, who had incurred the Prince's displeasure in taking that post under the court government. She was probably anxious to forget the folly at Lainston in the midst of this new success, and was certainly not at all enthusiastic upon her sailor's return. There are various accounts of her relations with her husband upon his reappearance. One biographer asserts that Hervey only saw her once at his rooms with a black servant in the house, "an assignation with a vengeance," as the lady herself was accustomed to speak of the meeting in after years. Other accounts make them living together for a time at Elizabeth's house in Conduit Street. This last theory seems inconsistent with her continued retention of the post of maid of honour to the Princess, but there were wonderful ways of saving appearances in those days. This is plain when one reads the indisputed fact that in the following year Elizabeth bore Hervey a son. She managed, however, to conceal the occurrence by a retreat to Chelsea for the air, and there, attended by Mr. Cæsar Hawkins, a noted surgeon of those days, she brought forth the boy, who was christened at Chelsea Old Church on the 2nd of November 1847; as "Henry Augustus, son of the Honble. Augustus Hervey." The child was put out to



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

nurse, and died a few months later, and Elizabeth returned to the Princess's court with a renewed youth and bloom, and prepared to deny the fact of the baby altogether. Rumours got about, but Elizabeth was quite equal to the occasion. "Would you believe," she said to Lord Chesterfield at the Prince's court, "that they say I have had twins?" "I never believe more than half I hear," was his lordship's reply. Upon one point all the accounts are agreed, that Hervey and his wife parted finally after the birth of this child.

There were, no doubt, ample reasons for this in the demeanour of the young lady, who resumed her place at the court as the idol and toast of the town, and the object of the vows of a fresh bevy of young men. Never was such a fascinating creature from all accounts. Here was the young Duke of Hamilton back again, as faithful as when he parted at Wapping Old Stairs some three years before. His grace had an interview with Elizabeth, who perhaps explained that his letters had never reached her, perhaps indicated the culprit in Mrs. Hanmer, but who certainly gave the Duke no hope of fulfilment of their engagement. The Duke, as is well known, went off and married Miss Elizabeth Gunning in such haste at Keith's Chapel that he forgot to provide a ring, and made shift with one cut from a curtain for the ceremony. The Duke of Ancaster was another highly-placed individual who shared the same fate with the Duke of Hamilton, "together with several other

## A MAID OF HONOUR

noblemen," as we are informed. It must have been doomshard for Elizabeth to be forced to refuse so many brilliant offers by reason of that unfortunate indiscretion at Lainston; her mother, who was not in the secret, thought her clearly out of her mind. Hervey now began to grow restive, and displayed a quite natural objection to Elizabeth as the inspiration of all this love-making, while he himself was debarred from the pleasure of her society. Whenever his duties allowed of his being ashore, he hung like an unquiet spirit about all the movements of his wife, appeared at every rout, ball, or race-meeting at which she assisted, and followed her about the country as a sort of attendant Nemesis to avenge that early folly at Lainston. Here was obviously a difficult position for Elizabeth, but there is no reason to believe that she worried herself unduly about it. Hervey is said to have threatened to make public the marriage; one set of her critics declares that she thereupon posted off to Lainston, and, while entertaining Mr. Amis with "a funny story," contrived to remove the entry of her marriage from the register; but, for reasons already set out, it is improbable that she went to that trouble. Hervey then threatened to inform the Princess of all the circumstances of the marriage. Elizabeth is said to have parried this stroke by going to her Royal Highness herself and making a clean breast of it to that royal lady, who forgave her, pitied her, kept her secret, and allowed her to remain in her

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

post. The thing seems incredible, but not more so than some other incidents in Elizabeth's amazing career. It is quite certain that she survived the threatened danger, and continued to enjoy to the full the advantages of her position.

King George the Second, whose well-known gallantry suffered no decline with his advancing years, was quite early attracted by the fascinating Chudleigh, and the particular attention and countenance of his Majesty had, doubtless, much to do with the eminence in the world of fashion which she continued to enjoy until the end of his reign. Among the favourite diversions of King George's later years was the masquerade, or masked ball, an entertainment of Venetian origin recently introduced to London by Mr. Heidegger, in which his Majesty took great delight, and was accustomed to share in disguise with the more frolicsome of his subjects. It amused the old King to be asked by some lady to put down her teacup, to watch without being observed the antics of the dancers, or admire the eccentricity of the costumes in which they arrayed themselves. It is amazing to read of some of the dresses which passed muster with the highest society at those revels. One gentleman went in silk fleshings as Adam; another in a shroud, with a property coffin on his back; a third walked about in a small thatched cottage which bore the fire insurance company's badge, a fact which inspired some humorist who was present to apply a light to the thatch. Among

## A MAID OF HONOUR

the many eccentric figures at these assemblies, Elizabeth was ordinarily the most extravagant. King George commanded a special masquerade in her honour in 1749, showed her much attention, and bought her a watch at one of the booths with money from his own royal purse. George was no doubt pleased at the young lady's costume, though all the ladies of the town professed themselves mightily shocked. She went as "Iphigenia prepared for the Sacrifice," and we really hesitate to print the description of this dress, which Mrs. Montagu, the chief of all the bluestockings, put upon record; it may, however, be seen graphically represented in the engravings of the day by any one curious enough to search among them.

The King, in fact, became almost a declared lover of the fascinating creature. "He has had a hankering for her these two years," wrote Walpole in 1750, in announcing a great triumph of Elizabeth's in procuring for her mother the post of housekeeper at Windsor Castle. The place was worth £800 a year, and was the object of the aspirations of half the needy gentlewomen in the country. It was known that a vacancy was imminent, and Walpole speaks of the appointment as having been "largely solicited." There was a Drawing-Room at St. James's, when the King strode up to the fair Elizabeth and told her "he was glad to have an opportunity of obeying her commands" by appointing her mother housekeeper of Windsor Castle. His Majesty added that he hoped she

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

would not think a kiss too great a reward for his gift, "and, against all precedent," says Horace, with something like awe, "he kissed her in the circle." Thus was poor widow Chudleigh provided for, and few would grudge her this solace for her years; one imagines she had but a poor time of it at Conduit Street with that masterful daughter. The widow lived six years to enjoy her £800 a year, and her death is marked for us by another entry in Walpole's inimitable record. Elizabeth was seen to shed some, let us hope, natural tears at the Drawing-Room, and Horace quotes one of those facetious efforts of George Selwyn, which do not always sustain the prodigious reputation for wit which that gentleman enjoyed during his lifetime.

"What filial piety, what mournful grace  
For a lost parent sits on Chudleigh's face.  
Fair virgin, weep no more, your anguish smother,  
You in this town can never want a mother."

It is difficult to ascertain how much or how little of Elizabeth's true history was known at this time. It all came out later, of course, but at present one supposes the secret to have been in very few hands. Walpole and the other chroniclers of the scandal of the day were at present silent upon details of her life about which they grew very eloquent later, and were mainly occupied with prattle about her appearance, her ménage, and the splendour of her entertainments. Thus, in the last year of King George's reign, the maid of

## A MAID OF HONOUR

honour, being then in her fortieth year, gave a ball of surpassing elegance, at which Horace himself was good enough to assist, though he made no scruple of sneering at much that he saw. Elizabeth's splendid hospitality was loyally exercised in celebration of the young Prince George's birthday. "Poor thing," says Walpole, "I am afraid she has thrown away above a quarter's salary." The Duke of York was there, the foreign ambassadors, and many other persons of distinction; the courtyard of the house was illuminated, and the boundary walls picked out with battlements in coloured lamps. The whole affair, indeed, by Horace's admission, was exceedingly well arranged, with no crowd, and no one a moment incommoded, though the night was sultry. Miss Chudleigh opened the ball with his Royal Highness, who was dressed in "a blue watered tabby," and it seems clear from the distinction she received in such attention that whatever Elizabeth's enormities, they had not affected her prestige in the world of fashion in 1760.

It was just at this time that Elizabeth's feelings towards her husband underwent a surprising change, which led her into one of the most audacious acts of her audacious career. It is not suggested for a moment that she redeveloped any tenderness for the captain, indeed she was accustomed to say throughout her life that "her misery began with the arrival of Captain Hervey in England, and the greatest joy she ever experienced

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

was the intelligence of his departure." But his brother, the Earl of Bristol, fell seriously ill, and as he was without children, everything pointed to the probability of Augustus succeeding to the earldom as his heir. It was a false alarm, as events turned out, for Lord Bristol's death did not take place until fifteen years later, when Hervey at last succeeded him. But the mere probability was enough to stir Elizabeth's ambition; Hervey, as an impecunious captain, however able, was a different person altogether from a potential Earl of Bristol, with a fine mansion and a fine landed estate in Suffolk. It might, indeed, be worth while to acknowledge such a husband as that, and even to share his fortunes, so Elizabeth decided to have the evidence of their marriage at her disposal if events should render its production advisable.

In February, accordingly, having obtained leave of absence from the Princess for a little trip into the country, she took the coach for Winchester, and having arrived in that city, engaged apartments at the Blue Boar. She only reached Winchester in the evening, and by six o'clock the next morning had already dispatched an urgent message to Parson Amis requesting him to come to see her at the inn. Mr. Amis, however, being in but indifferent health, sent his wife. Elizabeth at once opened the subject of her visit by asking that lady whether she thought the clergyman was prepared to give a certificate of her marriage with Hervey, which had taken place in his church at

## A MAID OF HONOUR

Lainston sixteen years before. The good lady thought that he would, but said he was very ill. Elizabeth hoped he would make an effort to see her, and Mrs. Amis then departed to persuade her husband to get up and return with her for an interview with Elizabeth at the Blue Boar.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth sent a messenger post haste for her old friend Mr. Merrill, who very obligingly waited upon her. There was a consultation between these worthies, which was joined by Mr. and Mrs. Amis later. It was then arranged that an attorney should be sent for, and Mrs. Amis knowing a man of law by the name of Spearing in Winchester, it was decided to consult him; Elizabeth, however, with some natural diffidence, thought it better that she should not appear, so concealed herself in a closet which opened out of her room. Mr. Spearing having arrived, Mr. Merrill explained the business they all had in view, produced some stamped paper, and requested Mr. Amis to make the register upon it. "Oh," said Mr. Spearing, "that will never do; the entry must be made in a book, and Mrs. Hervey must be at the making of it." Elizabeth was then produced from the cupboard, and a further consultation took place. The useful Spearing knew where to find a suitable book, and went out for it. To get over the difficulty of the blank pages with the single entry of the marriage of Augustus and Elizabeth, the party bethought them of the death of old



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

Mrs. Merrill, which had occurred only a few weeks before the marriage. The book began, therefore, with that record, and went on to the nuptials of Elizabeth. These entries having been made by Mr. Amis, he handed the book to that lady, who expressed much gratitude, saying that "it might be £100,000 in her way." She seems, however, to have remembered that the keeping of the register is properly in the hands of the incumbent of the church, and handed it, before she left, to Mrs. Amis, with the request that if her husband unhappily died, she would pass it on to Mr. Merrill. That event taking place shortly afterwards, Mrs. Amis carried out her instructions, much to Elizabeth's prejudice, as later events proved.

Such were Elizabeth's proceedings at Winchester in February of 1759, proceedings which would appear incredible were they not attested by one of the actors in sworn evidence before the House of Lords some fifteen years later. It was Mrs. Amis herself who described the manufacture of the false register, and the eventual destination of that incriminating document. After Mr. Amis's death, his widow married again, and became a Mrs. Phillips, the wife of the steward of the Duke of Kingston, in which capacity she had some further acquaintance with Elizabeth. It appeared that Merrill died in 1767, and the book remained among the papers he left behind him. One of his daughters, looking through these, came upon it and handed it over to the new incumbent, Mr.

## A MAID OF HONOUR

Kinchin. The Earl of Bristol having recovered, Elizabeth's immediate use for the register no longer existed, and she seems to have thought it in safe hands with the Merrills, in any case. But it was found years later, as we shall see, at a very inconvenient moment for this enterprising lady. Meanwhile she returned to London in high good humour, and resumed her place as an ornament of the town.

Walpole, in describing one of the Chudleigh's entertainments in 1760, ends with the remark: "The Lord of the festival was there, and seemed neither ashamed nor vain at the expense of his pleasures. At supper she offered him Tokay; on all the sideboards, and even on the chairs, were pyramids and troughs of strawberries and cherries, you would have thought she was kept by Vertumnus."

That is a very typical passage of the good Walpole, who wrote thus to Lord Stafford of the lady whose bread he had eaten; it is a reference in Horace's lightest manner to Elizabeth's relations with the Duke of Kingston. This was Evelyn Pierrepont, second and last duke, a nobleman of great estate whose titles and dignities fill pages of the peerages of that day. The Duke was an amiable but shy man, totally unassuming, and very loth to insist on the privileges of his high station; he despised ostentation, indeed, to the point of folding back the lapel of his coat in order to conceal the star of his order. He was good-natured

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

to weakness, and may be regarded as the fascinating Elizabeth's final victim. By the year 1760, although the maid of honour still kept her place about the Princess of Wales, it was known to the whole town that she was the acknowledged mistress of the Duke. The house in Conduit Street was relinquished for other establishments, and being in no lack of funds in her new circumstances, Elizabeth embarked in a large scheme of building in Knightsbridge, where she erected a great mansion, later known as Kingston House. There is no record at all of any rupture with the Princess, and as Elizabeth was received with great cordiality by young King George shortly after his accession, it may be assumed that even that austere moralist saw nothing in her relations with the Duke of Kingston at which to look askance.

Elizabeth was now near the summit of her fortunes, and felt her ambition would be attained if she could only induce her lover to convert their present irregular connection into one of lawful marriage. The Duke, however, was somewhat coy, from all accounts. He had doubtless heard rumours of her early connection with Hervey, and was quite probably dissatisfied with her explanation of it. At any rate there were endless fêtes and entertainments, at which he presided with the lady, frequent visits to Thoresby, the ducal place in the midlands; trout fishing expeditions on the Colne, where the maid of honour was accustomed to guard against the risks of wading by pouring

## A MAID OF HONOUR

generous quantities of rum into her boots; every sort of diversion, indeed, except that of the wedding in form. Elizabeth's life was a perpetual honeymoon, but with the marriage itself at present in prospect only, though all London continued to flock to the banquets, balls, and assemblies which she continued to provide for the town on the most lordly scale, feasts furnished forth with rare wines and costly service of plate and fine linen, and often with the adjuncts of fireworks and illuminations, then less often seen than in times nearer our own.

Walpole, with his usual amiability, is the historian of what may have been a crumpled rose-leaf for Elizabeth in all this glory. He declared in 1764 that the Duke had found a rival whom he had taken to Thoresby, and that Elizabeth, in pique, decided to try a spell of absence in order to bring back the Duke to her affections. "Miss Chudleigh," he says, "on Friday last at the Princess's birthday, beat her side till she could not help having a real pain in it, that people might inquire what was the matter, on which she notified a pleurisy, and that she is going to the baths of Carlsbad in Bohemia." Such is Horace's explanation of the trip abroad which the Chudleigh undoubtedly took in that year, which may or may not be the true one, Horace must have his sneer at all costs; and on the other side may be recorded the fact that the Duke accompanied the lady to Harwich, and there took an affectionate

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

farewell. Elizabeth made Berlin her chief resting-place in the early part of her trip, and was certainly received with all the consideration she could have expected in that city. She went to the Prussian court and was presented to Frederic the Great, who seems to have paid her some little attention, even wrote her little almost illegible scraps of letters, which she was accustomed to show with great pride in after years. Had she known of other letters written by his Majesty at the same time, which may now be read in his published correspondence, she might have been less pleased. "I have not much to say," he wrote to a lady friend, "except of the appearance of an English lady, Miss Chudleigh, who emptied two bottles of wine and staggered as she danced, and nearly fell on the floor." It may have been Frederic's influence which introduced the Chudleigh to the court of Saxony, or perhaps her position at the Princes's court was sufficient to secure her that honour. In any case she went to Dresden and found a friend in the Electress, who in later times wrote to her in very affectionate terms. "You have long experienced my love, my revenue, my protection, my everything you may command. Come, then, my dear life, to an asylum of peace. Quit a country where, if you are bequeathed a cloak, some pretender may start up and ruin you by law to prove it your property. Let me have you at Dresden." Elizabeth on the whole made a very good thing out of her native country, which

## A MAID OF HONOUR

the Electress thought so unworthy of her, and was chiefly employed during half-a-century in depriving other people of the cloaks and other chattels to which they were entitled. But her success in thus imposing upon the Electress as to her true character, may perhaps be regarded as proof of ability of a certain kind.

It was said by one of many of the scribes who occupied themselves with the Chudleigh's affairs when they became famous a few years later, that at the time she first contracted her irregular connection with the Duke of Kingston she succeeded in cajoling his grace into an undertaking to marry her so soon as she could prove herself a free woman, or to pay her £100,000 down. That, again, is a statement incapable of proof, and the sum named seems a high figure, whatever the charms of the lady, and however complete the infatuation of the easy-going Duke. It was stated on the same authority that after she had succeeded in manipulating the Lainston register at the Blue Boar, she had triumphantly declared that she could now choose between being Countess of Bristol and Duchess of Kingston. However this may have been, it is clear that upon her return, full of renewed vigour, from the continent, she deliberately set herself to clear up the rather nebulous state of her matrimonial affairs, so as to enable her to ask the church to bestow its blessing on her union with the Duke. She and her mature lover had met again with all affection upon her

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

arrival in England, and she was doubtless at last convinced of his grace's willingness to consent to the ceremony.

The chief difficulty now was with Hervey. Up to a recent period that gentleman had shown himself extremely unaccommodating; he had declared, in fact, in his nautical way, "that he would see her at the devil before her vanity should be gratified by being a duchess." But time and chance had brought an alteration in the captain's point of view. Hervey's active service had ceased with the peace of 1763, and though he had still a distinguished parliamentary and official career before him, he was henceforth on shore with ample time in which to deplore the forlorn state of his matrimonial affairs. In such unpropitious circumstances he happened to meet a young lady of the name of Moyse—"Miss Rhubarb," as Horry Walpole pleasantly names her, in allusion to the profession of her father, a physician of Bath—with whom he fell prodigiously in love. Here, then, was an obviously interesting position. Hervey wished to be free of Elizabeth in order to marry the little Moyse; Elizabeth was presented with an elegant opportunity of at last gaining her Duke. They only differed as to the means of arriving at the same desirable consummation—the dissolution of their marriage at Lainston in 1743.

Hervey appears to have opened the negotiations which followed. He happened to meet Mr. Cæsar Hawkins, whom he saw attending Eliza-

## A MAID OF HONOUR

beth at Chelsea nearly twenty years earlier, and asked him to call upon him, not, as the captain explained, on account of his health, but in respect of "an old friend of his." Mr. Hawkins made an appointment, and duly waited upon Hervey, whom he found expecting him and surrounded with a prodigious heap of law papers. After some polite preliminaries, Hervey stated his business. He said that for some time past he had been very unhappy on account of his matrimonial connection with Miss Chudleigh, which he was now determined to bring to an end. He had employed agents, he continued, pointing to the papers, to collect ample evidence for a divorce, and he was now determined to prosecute a suit with the utmost firmness and resolution. At the same time, however, he wished Mr. Hawkins to assure Miss Chudleigh that he retained such a regard for her that he was most anxious that no extraneous matter injurious to her reputation should be allowed to creep into the evidence. He suggested, therefore, that her lawyers should go through the proofs of the evidence he had collected with his own, and that they should together agree as to what should be left to come before the House of Lords.

Mr. Hawkins duly delivered this obliging message to Elizabeth, who in effect desired Mr. H. to return to the captain and thank him for nothing. She was much obliged, she said, for the polite part of his message, but as to divorce pro-



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

ceedings, she begged him to understand that she had never acknowledged him for her legal husband at all, and that she herself was about to institute proceedings by which she would call upon him to prove the marriage he alleged, or else hold his slanderous tongue on the matter. But she quite appreciated his kindly offer not to drag into his proposed suit any "indecent or scandalous reflection," and in such circumstances was sure she could rely upon him not to bring into his defence to her suit any extraneous and irrelevant matters like alleged cohabitation or children, "which would only give occasion for tittle-tattle and scandal." She concluded by reminding Hervey that if his freedom was all he wished, that could best be attained by allowing her suit to go forward. Mr. Hawkins delivered his message, and reported that Hervey received it "as one affected or struck by it. He added, as if to himself, that he did not conceive that he should have equal freedom by that method," and concluded by saying he had no wish to rake up any scandal, and would confine his defence to her suit to establishing the marriage at Lainston.

Elizabeth at this juncture must grievously have regretted that expedition of hers to the Blue Boar and the concoction of the register, to which at least three people living were witnesses. On the other hand, it was true that these were all parties to the fraud, and might be trusted not to chatter for their own sakes, and as the accusing document was in

## A MAID OF HONOUR

the safe keeping of one of them, the accommodating Mr. Merrill, she no doubt felt reasonably safe. At any rate she displayed no sort of hesitation in instituting her action. This took the form of a suit in an ecclesiastical court, for what was known as Jactitation of Marriage, by which, if he failed to prove the ceremony, Hervey was forbidden, under penalty, from asserting that it had ever taken place. Elizabeth's evidence may still be read in the reports of the Consistory Court, and amazing evidence it is. She swore that no marriage had ever been solemnized or contracted between her and the captain; that he had at least once been asked to abstain from "false and malicious boasting that he was her husband," but that he continued with "like malice and rashness constantly to report the same, to the great danger of his soul's health, and to the no small prejudice to the said Honourable Elizabeth Chudleigh." In support of her plea, Elizabeth swore that she was a maid of honour to the Princess of Wales up to the time of the death of the Prince in 1751, when she was readmitted to the same appointment, where she still continued; that she had taken leases, transacted business, borrowed £1000 of Mr. Drummond the banker, presented a living, and done various other acts all in her own name as spinster, and without let or hindrance from her pretended husband.

There was, indeed, some mighty hard swearing in this case, nor was it confined to Elizabeth.

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

There was never so complaisant a defendant as Hervey, and he carried out his promise of acting the gentleman not only in the letter, but in the spirit. He was very tender as to the lady's age, to begin with, and his own, for that matter. He was a bachelor of seventeen or eighteen, he said, when, in 1744, he paid his "addresses of love and courtship" to the young lady at Lainston, who might have been some eighteen years at that time. He made a modest statement of the circumstances of the secret marriage, but brought no scrap of documentary evidence to prove it, and produced no single witness. There was no word in his defence, be it noted, of the child born, christened and buried at Chelsea. "Some differences having arisen between them on account of the conduct of the said Elizabeth, they continued to live separate from each other, and he had never visited her," was the captain's explanation of their present relations.

Hervey's defence, indeed, was no defence at all, and it is not surprising to read that the Vicar-General, Dr. Bettesworth, pronounced a decree in Elizabeth's favour, declared that she was a spinster free from all encumbrances, admonished Captain Hervey to desist from "boasting and asserting that he was her husband," and condemned that gentleman in costs "which we tax and moderate at the sum of £100 sterling."

Hervey's poor appearance in this business caused a good deal of head-shaking among the

## A MAID OF HONOUR

virtuous ones in 1769; some talked roundly of collusion, others, like Horace Walpole, declared *sans phrase* that Elizabeth had bought her husband off, and named the sum, £14,000. Hervey's biographer admits that he lost reputation in the business, and if Walpole's facts are true, there is little wonder. We learn, too, that he did not get his little Miss Moyse after all. Her father, the physician, disapproved altogether of the match, and offered her £5000 not to marry Hervey. "Miss Rhubarb is as much above worldly decorum as the rest," says Horace, "and persists. It is a cruel case for Hervey's family, who can never acquiesce in the legitimacy of the children, if any come of this bigamy." Horry's solicitude for the hard case of the Hervey family was not justified, for the physician brought his daughter to reason, and the bigamy was therefore confined to one only of the original actors in the Lainston ceremony.

The maid of honour at last surrendered all claim to that title by marrying her Duke. "Next week," says Horace, "the provident virgin who has appeared in Doctors' Commons and sworn by the virgins Mary and Diana that she was never married to Mr. Hervey, and is but fifty, is to be married to the Duke of Kingston, who has kept her almost half that time." So it proved. On the 8th of March 1769, the marriage took place by special licence in her house in St. Margaret's parish, Westminster. There is no adequate ac-

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

count of the ceremony, but the Reverend Samuel Harper of the British Museum officiated, and Elizabeth omitted no precautions this time, for there were eight witnesses who signed the register, besides his reverence. The Duke and she were described as bachelor and spinster. So we may suppose Elizabeth at last attained her ambition, and that her amazing career was accepted as quite regular and respectable is clear from the fact that the Duchess was presented at court on her marriage, and that King George the Third, Queen Charlotte, and the chief officers of the household all very obligingly wore her wedding favours. To make this ceremony at St. James's the more complete, Captain Hervey himself chose the occasion to pay his respects to their Majesties, and remarked aloud to some who stood near him, that "he had just come to take one last look at his widow."

We now see Elizabeth at the height of her prosperity, accepted by her sovereign as the wife of a duke, an indulgent and weak duke, moreover, whose estates were not entailed, and who was possessed of a huge personal property. She was destined to four years of this glory, with which we have little to do. She proved, as might be expected, an arbitrary and exacting wife, gave herself the greatest of airs (she called her attendants "maids of honour"), discharged old servants who had served her husband and his family for years, and made the quiet, easy-going man's life a misery

## A MAID OF HONOUR

to him. They continued to give great entertainments in London, she had a real fondness for music, and her band at Thoresby, which used to perform after breakfast while she wrote her letters, was one of the finest private bands in the country. The chief amusement of this curious pair when in town was attending Sir J. Fielding's court at Bow Street whenever a felon was to be examined, and where their coach was well known. But she very thoughtfully got the Duke to execute a will in her favour, so soon as the bustle of the wedding was over, and she took other provident measures by secreting all the jewels she could lay her hands upon. Then, the honeymoon, as we know, having been spent years before the marriage, Elizabeth, perhaps, felt she would be interrupting no raptures if she took a second trip abroad. She had a special carriage built for this purpose by Mr. Wright of Long Acre, with most extraordinary and ingenious conveniences for long journeys, and started off with a Miss Bate and a Miss Penrose as companions, a manservant, and a hussar recommended by Lord Granby as an escort, and an apothecary and a Jew musician to complete her retinue. She was bound for the Electoral Court at Dresden, but after travelling about half-way to her destination, she received a message from the Electress to say that she was suffering from the small-pox, so Elizabeth incontinently returned to her Duke after only a few weeks abroad.

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

It was not long before a premonitory stroke of paralysis beckoned to that nobleman, and the final summons came in September 1773, when Evelyn Pierrepont, Baron Kingston, Marquess of Dorchester and Duke of Kingston, the last of a line which had been in high place in England for seven hundred years, joined his fathers and left his estate and his wealth in the hands of the adventuress whose history we know. The landed estate was left to her only as life tenant, but his great personal property was Elizabeth's absolutely so long as she remained a widow. The Duke mentioned in his will that he imposed that restriction because he felt that his wife was liable to be deceived by "any adventurer who flattered her." If we may believe Walpole, Elizabeth's show of grief was as extravagant as any of her other many eccentricities. "She moved by slow stages to London; and made as many halts as Queen Eleanor's corpse. At one of the inns where her grief baited, she was in too great an agony to descend to the door, and was slung into a bow window, as Mark Antony was into Cleopatra's monument." Thus the playful Walpole, and it is difficult to deny that Elizabeth was fair game. Mason, Walpole's friend, improved the raillery by declaring that "she ate black puddings and drank black cherry brandy only, not being able to eat anything of a gayer colour."

When the first transports of this grief were over, Elizabeth again determined to seek relief from

## A MAID OF HONOUR

her woe in foreign parts, and a few months after the Duke's death, she set out for Rome, where at that time reigned Clement XIV, the "Protestant Pope," who was noted for the marked attention he paid to the English. His holiness was very ready to extend his civilities to the great lady who now appeared in Rome, accorded her grace many privileges, and even lodged her in the palace of one of the cardinals. The Duchess was quite prepared to play the *grande dame*, and, in fact, delighted the Romans in that capacity. She was one of the first persons in England to own a private yacht, which she now ordered out from home to Civita Vecchia. What better plan of exhibiting her state to the Romans than to get it up the Tiber and display it to the admiring citizens? Accordingly, "at considerable trouble and some expense," as we read, the little vessel was hauled up the river and moored within the precincts of the Eternal City, amid the applause of the crowd. Elizabeth, indeed, seems to have enjoyed her life at Rome hugely, and proceeded to make arrangements for a long stay. She deposited large sums of money with her banker, Mr. Jenkins, and, as Walpole hints, was enabled by the favour of the Pope to make the Vatican itself a depository for her jewels and valuables.

Meanwhile, however, she received news from England of a most ominous menace to her prosperity. With Elizabeth's early history now more or less common property, it was improbable that



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

the relations of the Duke of Kingston would allow her to remain in possession of his large fortune without some effort to contest her title; as it proved, they were much aided in their efforts by the stupidity of her man of business in London, and by Elizabeth's own meanness. The Duke's family was now represented by two nephews, Evelyn and Charles Medows, the sons of his sister Lady Frances, who had married a gentleman of that name of good family but small fortune, then holding the office of Deputy-Ranger of Richmond Park. Lady Frances Medows had not been on good terms with the Duke, and her elder son, Evelyn, was also out of favour with his uncle, who had passed him over in his will and made his brother Charles heir-at-law, and his successor in the landed estates after Elizabeth's life tenancy should have come to an end. Mr. Evelyn Medows was consequently very sore, and willing and anxious to seize any opportunity of setting aside his grace's will.

Captain Hervey also had shown no disposition to lie down under the decree of the Consistory Court, and had become restless; he had, indeed, petitioned the King in Council for a new trial before the Duke's death, and the matter was still in suspense. Elizabeth's affairs, in one form or another, were constantly before the public, a state of things to which she herself much contributed by her eccentricity and ostentation, and it was thus inevitable that all who were in any way interested

## A MAID OF HONOUR

in her fortunes should be much on the alert. Among these was our old acquaintance Ann Cradock, who had played so useful a part in keeping the ring, so to speak, at that first fatal encounter between Augustus and Elizabeth at Lainston. Poor Ann was getting on in years and had fallen upon indigence, and it now occurred to her that the knowledge she possessed of that early folly might be of value to one side or the other, and, incidentally, to herself. She presented herself accordingly to her grace's attorney, one Mr. Field, of Lincoln's Inn, informed him that she had a real claim on the Duchess's sympathy, urged her distress, and stated her case. It is uncertain how much Mr. Field knew of Elizabeth's early career, and consequently how far he was qualified to estimate the value of her story, but he was deaf to Ann's entreaties. Ann accordingly changed her demeanour, brought the interview to an end, and parted from Mr. Field with the menace that her information would be "doubly useful to the relatives of the late Duke." Upon this Field seems to have consulted Elizabeth, who committed an amazing indiscretion. She admitted Cradock's claim by offering her an annuity, but fixed the amount at £20 a year, and even hedged that pitiful allowance with the condition that Ann should be banished to a village she named in the Peak district of Derbyshire.

Ann rejected the offer with derision, and went off forthwith to Mr. Evelyn Medows, who was

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

very glad to see her. He would have been satisfied, indeed, with less than Ann Cradock had to tell him. He and his legal advisers were put into possession of all the particulars of that romantic evening at Lainston, which we have already recited from her evidence, and with the even more interesting information regarding the manufacture of the false register at the Blue Boar now placed at their disposal by Mrs. Phillips, they had no hesitation in beginning proceedings against Elizabeth. An indictment for bigamy was framed, and in the absence of the Duchess Mr. Field was served with notice, and the matter in its preliminary stage coming before the Grand Jury of Middlesex, a true bill was found against her grace for the offence. This was the heavy news that reached Elizabeth in the midst of her revelry at Rome, together with the urgent advice that she should hasten to England at once and appear to the indictment in order to avoid outlawry.

It was upon that prospect of outlawry, rendered possible by Elizabeth's absence at the other end of Europe, that Mr. Pierrepont's chief hope was fixed; with such a decree against her Elizabeth's property in England would have been at the mercy of the courts, and Mr. Pierrepont and his brother would have scarcely failed to come to their own. It is said that Pierrepont, with this object in view, had already tampered with Elizabeth's banker in Rome, Mr. Jenkins, and that gentleman's unaccommodating ways at this crisis

## A MAID OF HONOUR

lend colour to the charge. Upon receipt of the news from London Elizabeth at once called on Mr. Jenkins for funds with which to hasten across Europe in order to appear to her indictment. She was informed that he was not at home; she called again and again, with the same result. But both Pierrepont and Jenkins were yet to realize that they were dealing with a very masculine spirit. Tired of her constant disappointment in endeavouring to get sight of Mr. Jenkins, Elizabeth at length put a brace of pistols into her pocket and sat down upon his doorstep. He must have other business, she declared, which would bring him to his shop, and she was determined to be there when he arrived, whether she waited a month or a year. This hardy declaration decided Mr. Jenkins to appear and give the Duchess an interview. She demanded money, he hesitated and prevaricated, whereupon she drew her pistol and held it at his head until he consented to provide her with the funds she required for her journey. She then immediately quitted Rome for England.

One is little surprised to read that Elizabeth broke down on that dismal journey; she was in a fever which necessitated a halt before she reached the Alps, and had but a tardy convalescence, delayed by an abscess in her side, which rendered a post-carriage impossible, when the indomitable woman pushed on in a litter. One is almost forced to admire the resolute spirit of this adventuress, in spite of all her faults. She arrived at last at

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

Calais, torn with anxiety, and filled with a fear that her liberty might be endangered if she landed in England. It seems difficult to deny Elizabeth the possession of some undefined quality which gained her many friends. She had never lacked the countenance and support of persons of high station since Pulteney discovered her in Devonshire, and at the present crisis in her affairs there were numerous men of position in England willing to help and advise her in her extremity. She had been in Calais but a few days when the great Murray, Lord Mansfield, who had been Lord Chief Justice, found time to run over and see her, and was able to calm her fears as to the danger of imprisonment without bail, and assure her that she might continue her journey without danger. She crossed to Dover accordingly, hurried to London, where she went to Kingston House, and was able to consult with other influential friends who were waiting to give her all assistance. Her council apparently included the Dukes of Newcastle, Ancaster and Portland, Lord Mountstuart, Lord Barrington, as well as a Lincolnshire squire, Mr. Glover, a gentleman of very independent, not to say arbitrary, character. The Duke of Newcastle, Lord Mountstuart and Mr. Glover, indeed, were good enough to go bail for her, and Elizabeth had thus ample breathing space in which to prepare her defence for the trial, which, as it proved, did not take place until April of the following year, 1776. In the meantime Captain Hervey had



Capt. Augustus John Hervey  
3rd Earl of Bristol



## A MAID OF HONOUR

succeeded to the earldom of Bristol by the death of his brother on the 24th of May preceding, an event for which Elizabeth in due time had great cause to be thankful.

It was at this juncture that Samuel Foote, the ill-conditioned patentee of the Haymarket Theatre, made a disgraceful attempt to levy blackmail upon Elizabeth. He chose this moment of her trouble to write a piece with the title of a *Trip to Calais*, one of the characters of which, Lady Kitty Crocodile, presented many of Elizabeth's peculiarities in very unflattering terms. He caused it to be known about town that he was shortly to produce this piece at his theatre, and found means of conveying the same information to the Duchess. Elizabeth took alarm, as he intended she should, and sent for him, as he also intended. Foote read the piece to her, and though protesting that the character of Lady Kitty was not meant for her, yet expressed his willingness to suppress the piece upon the receipt of £2000, with a further sum for his pains in converting it into another play. Elizabeth, though furious at the attempted extortion, offered first £1400, then £1600, and was actually writing a draft on Drummonds for the latter sum when Foote refused it, thinking she would come to his terms. But he was mistaken in his adversary, as he once was in a famous difference with Samuel Johnson, who threatened the rascal with a big stick in similar circumstances. Elizabeth's friends advised her



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

to begin a suit of criminal libel against Foote should he dare to perform the piece, and a box was taken at the theatre during the season for her shorthand writer, Mr. Blanchard, to obtain the necessary evidence. But her friends again came to her assistance, and the Duke of Newcastle exerted his interest with Lord Hertford, the Lord Chamberlain, to forbid the acting of the piece. Foote was thus beaten, and the honours would have rested with Elizabeth had she not, in an unlucky moment, written to the actor a very abusive letter. This gave the able scoundrel his opportunity, and he published a reply in which she was held up to the derision of the town. But Foote lost whatever credit he possessed by this attempt to extort money from a woman in difficulty, and one of his best friends declared that he deserved to be run through the body.

With this distraction removed, Elizabeth was now able to give her full attention to the preparation of her defence. Upon the declaration of a true bill by the Grand Jury of Middlesex she at once claimed to be tried by her peers in the House of Lords, a claim which was irresistible in view of the fact that she had recently become a countess at the least, by virtue of her captain's succession to the earldom of Bristol. The certainty, thus established, that Elizabeth would be tried by a body of several hundred amateur judges like the peers provided an excellent opportunity for her well-wishers among their lordships. There was a

## A MAID OF HONOUR

long preliminary discussion in the House as to the advisability of holding a trial at all. Many of their lordships declared themselves opposed to it upon the score of expense; Lord Mansfield seized these doubts as an opportunity for urging the abandonment of the proceedings altogether. "*Cui bono*," said his lordship, "what utility is to be obtained even supposing a conviction to be the result? The lady makes your lordships a curtsy, and you return the lady a bow." Chancellor Bathurst, however, was vehement for a trial, and the solemn proceedings accordingly went forward. But Mansfield's evident advocacy of Elizabeth and her cause damped the spirits of the prosecution very considerably. Lord Mansfield possessed great influence, and Medows and his advisers were fearful that it might be sufficient to secure an acquittal. They therefore caused a hint to be conveyed privately to Elizabeth that the payment of the sum of £10,000 would ensure an abandonment of the prosecution, and the hint was at length developed into a positive offer. Some of Elizabeth's friends implored her to accept it, but in vain. Her lawyers assured her she had nothing to fear, and she professed to reject the overture as an insult. She expressed the greatest anxiety that the trial should take place at the earliest possible moment, talked of urgent business which awaited her with the Pope, and wished the tiresome business settled chiefly that she might be free to rush back to his holiness.

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

But she was secretly taking all precautions to ensure her acquittal if that were possible; she approached the inconvenient Cradock with a view to getting her out of the way, but that faithless creature not only refused the overtures with scorn, but carried news of them to the enemy.

The great day of the opening of the trial, the 15th of April 1776, at length arrived, and with it the function for which Europe had been waiting impatiently for months. There has seldom been an event which so stimulated the curiosity of the town as Elizabeth's trial for bigamy in Westminster Hall by her peers. The privilege of entrance to the proceedings had been sought with greater fervour than that of witnessing a coronation, the foreign ministers in London had been besieged by the nobility of their respective countries for tickets of admission, and as the day drew near the highroads of the continent had been enlivened by a procession of post-chaises hurrying the successful ones over for the ceremony. As for the native gentry, it was probably never so well represented. Queen Charlotte herself, with the princes of the blood, ladies eminent in rank and in beauty, men renowned in arms and art and letters, all flocked to the great Hall to watch the fortunes of the daughter of the Deputy-Governor of Chelsea Hospital in the hour of her tribulation. Hannah More wrote a capital letter describing the scene; shows us the air of expectation which pervaded the great assembly, the

## A MAID OF HONOUR

ladies chattering behind their fans, the Duchess of Devonshire, in the very height of her beauty, regaling herself with luncheon from her work-bag; all the pomp and ceremony invoked by the greatest tribunal in the kingdom in order to adjudicate upon the guilt or innocence of an adventuress whose moral betters were often disposed of without record at the Old Bailey.

Elizabeth made a better appearance than had been expected. Her charms were long gone, of course, and Hannah rather unfeelingly describes the full-blown widow as "a bale of bombazine with nothing white about her but her face, a black hood over her powdered hair, deep black gauze ruffles and black gloves, followed by four attendants in virgin white, to heighten the effect of her sables." But she surprised her friends and disappointed her enemies by the dignity of her demeanour. Walpole, who professed to expect a display of ostentatious folly, was driven from his sneering by the propriety of her behaviour; "she went through her part with universal admiration," he admitted; "all her conduct was decent, and even seemed natural."

There is no need here to follow the details of those musty proceedings, imposing as they were to the actual spectators, with the array of Lord High Stewards, judges and heralds to attend the solemn procession of peers spiritual and temporal, who marched in pairs according to their rank, beginning with the youngest barons. The

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

court having been thus constituted, Elizabeth was brought to the bar by Black Rod, where she made three reverences and fell upon her knees. The indictment having been read, she was asked by the Clerk to the Crown, "How say you, are you guilty of the felony?" "I am not guilty," she replied. "How will you be tried?" "By God and my peers." "God send you a good deliverance."

The issue was soon narrowed down to a single point: whether the decree of the ecclesiastical court which had declared her to be a spinster before her marriage with the Duke was to be held as absolute, or whether the means by which it had been obtained could be re-examined, and the whole question of the Lainston marriage reopened. Upon that point a whole array of big-wigs argued on opposite sides through three weary days. The argument went wholly against Elizabeth, and from the moment that became clear her cause was lost. Tiger Thurlow, who was in charge of the prosecution, had no sort of difficulty in proving his case. Lord Bristol was not called, but Thurlow triumphantly produced Ann Craddock and Mrs. Phillips, the remarried widow of Parson Amis, who both proved the marriage and the subsequent manipulation of the register, and Mr. Cæsar Hawkins, who swore to the birth of the child and to the later negotiations between Hervey and his wife. With this evidence before them, the peers, whatever their previous opinions

## A MAID OF HONOUR

might have been, had no option but to return the inevitable verdict of guilty. Their lordships all solemnly laid their hands on their hearts with the words, "Guilty, upon my honour," the Duke of Newcastle adding, "erroneously but not intentionally," and Elizabeth was called to the bar. She came well prepared. Upon the verdict being read over to her she handed a paper to the court, in which she prayed for the benefit of clergy as Countess of Bristol.

Their lordships were again unable to resist her plea, and Elizabeth was granted immunity from the consequences of her crime as the wife of a man whose claim as husband she had repudiated for over thirty years. The Lord High Steward, in bringing the proceedings to a close, informed her of their lordship's decision in as impressive language as he could muster in all the circumstances. "Madam," said he, "the lords have considered of the prayer you have made to have the benefits of the statutes, and the lords allow it you. But, madam, let me add that though very little punishment, or none, can be inflicted, the feelings of your own conscience will supply the defect. And let me give you this information likewise, that you can never have the like benefit a second time, but another offence of the same kind will be capital. You are discharged upon paying your fees." Elizabeth at fifty-seven was moderately safe from the temptation of a second bigamous marriage, one imagines, so the proceedings came

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

to an end little to her prejudice. They closed, indeed, with the exact result which Lord Mansfield had predicted when "she made their lordships a curtesy and they returned her a bow." The Lord High Steward broke his white wand, there was the usual scramble for the fragments, and Elizabeth left Westminster Hall a free woman.

During the later stages of the trial, when a verdict against her became a certainty, Elizabeth in private had exhibited much of her native truculence; she had talked bravely of barred doors and blunderbusses, and hinted her intention of standing a siege at Kingston House before submitting to the indignity of an arrest. But though the danger to her person was now removed by the gentle treatment of the peers, she was under no delusions as to her position with respect to Mr. Evelyn Medows, whose prosecution for bigamy had been only a means to an end, that of shaking the Duke of Kingston's wealth from her grasp, and, with her usual foresight, she was now prepared to escape his hungry clutches. Immediately after the trial Medows moved for a writ of *ne exeat regno*, which, if successful, would have kept the elusive lady in the kingdom, and allowed him to deal with her at his leisure. But, resourceful as ever, Elizabeth was alert to meet the new danger. In order to allay any suspicion, she ostentatiously sent her chariot about the town, and issued invitations for a grand banquet at Kingston

## A MAID OF HONOUR

House, and the same evening slipped quietly out of London, and drove post-haste to Dover. The faithful Captain Harding, who had taken her yacht over to Rome the year before, was awaiting her at the southern port, and hiring the first open boat she could find, Elizabeth was wafted across the Straits to Calais and safety.

We have been chiefly interested in the career of this audacious woman in England, where great social success and prodigious material prosperity as the rewards of continuous ill-doing seem to throw a somewhat sinister light upon the morality and the justice of the times. Her subsequent career, therefore, merits a less prominent place in the scheme of our undertaking. Not that it lacked interest or adventure. Elizabeth halted in Calais in order the better to watch the proceedings of her persecutor, Mr. Medows, about whose proceedings and their issue she still felt some uneasiness. She found a resting-place in an old house which she bought of a M. Cocove, a friend of Lord Granby, and a well-known Anglophil of those days. She graciously allowed his wife and children to occupy a wing of this house, and seems to have been very kind to them in promises, if not in actual deeds. She would show her dresses and jewels to the demoiselles, and hint at commissions for the sons in the French army. Was not his Majesty King Louis a friend of hers, and ready at all times to do her a civility; did not she herself come of a race of soldiers; when had the valour of the



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

ancient Chudleighs been surpassed? So Elizabeth bragged and played the *grande dame*, pulled the old house about, made new entrances and threw out bow windows, but does not seem to have brought any particular prosperity to the poor Cocoves.

We next hear of her in Rome, where a friar and a cardinal had raided the palace she had left in such a hurry a year before, taking away everything portable except a little Italian maid, whom one, or both, of the holy men had most shamefully ill-treated, or so the maid said. His Holiness the Pope, to whom she appealed, does not seem to have helped her much except with sympathy, and she closed her affairs in that city in some dudgeon and returned to Calais. Here, to her great relief, she heard from her friend Schomberg that the Dean of Arches and other legal luminaries he had consulted had declared the Duke's will to be as safe as the Rock of Gibraltar. She was so grateful to Schomberg that she sent him a ring, which, wanting some little repair, was taken to a jeweller, who pronounced it a sham, which had possibly cost thirty francs at the Palais Royal. Its value, however, was no measure of her own satisfaction at the favourable turn in her affairs, and she now prepared to carry out a scheme she had long cherished, that of visiting St. Petersburg, and gaining the recognition of the Czarina.

There were certain difficulties in carrying out this design, which, however, Elizabeth encoun-

## A MAID OF HONOUR

tered with her usual resolution. In order to ensure a favourable reception at St. Petersburg, she first sent a propitiatory offering of two pictures to Chernicheff, the Russian Minister in Paris, with a desire to be assured that she would be welcome at the Czarina's court. She discovered later that the pictures were by Raphael and Claude respectively, and made a desperate attempt to get them back from that gentleman, who, however, refused to accommodate her, and she left a clause in her will calling Heaven to witness that she had only deposited them with him for safety. It is said, also, that she sent a large number of works of art to the Czarina, who sorted out those of value to place in her collection, and very thriftily sold the rest for what they would fetch. She seems, however, to have become assured as to her reception with that potentate, and made preparations for her journey. There was another difficulty in the state of the high seas. The American War of Independence was in full blast, and Benjamin Franklin, the representative of the insurgent colonists at Paris, was besieged by adventurers praying for the grant of letters of marque, which should enable them to plunder all British property in the narrow waters of the Channel. Elizabeth and her fortunes were now so well known that her person was held to be worth a queen's ransom by these enterprising gentry, and there was hardly a tarry-breeks able to fit out the meanest lugger who was not itching to set sail as a privateer in quest of her so

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

soon as her yacht should have cleared out of Calais harbour. But Elizabeth was not the woman to fall into such a trap; she outwitted the whole gang by sailing under the French flag by permission of the King.

The Czarina, who, like Frederic of Prussia, delighted in curiosities, seems to have been quite kind to Elizabeth; her chief grievance was against Sir James Harris, the British ambassador, who could only be civil to her in private, an official slight which Elizabeth is said to have received with some chagrin. Her ambition was to receive some order and decoration from the Empress, and, with this in view, acting upon the advice of some of the Russian nobility, she bought a landed estate near the capital for £12,000, which consisted chiefly, from all accounts, of forest and water. The estate was not profitable, even after she had established a manufactory of vodka upon it, and she left it in charge of an English carpenter, whom she picked up in St. Petersburg, when later she quitted the city. Neither did its possession produce the wished-for distinction from the Empress, who was none the less quite kind—presented her, indeed, with another estate on the Neva of considerable value; of a double value to Elizabeth, perhaps, from the rights of seignory it conferred upon her; her tenants were obliged to kneel and kiss the hem of her garment, to her huge delight. In return for this munificence she gave a banquet of sur-

## A MAID OF HONOUR

passing magnificence, which the Czarina was good enough to honour by her presence, a banquet which required the services of 140 servants, and the service of which was on real plate. In other respects Elizabeth was more careful, for we read of a mutiny among her servants, occasioned, in part, at least, by her unpunctuality in paying wages. She seems to have exhausted the pleasures of the northern capital, and, finding that the distinction she hoped for was unlikely to be forthcoming, at length turned incontinently to Calais.

With her fears at last set at rest by the proved stability of the Duke's will, a provincial residence in France within sight of her native shores was no longer to her taste, and she now looked for a house in Paris. She pitched first upon a mansion at Montmartre, then a sequestered suburb of the city, and its purchase led to litigation which lasted with her life. Later she was in negotiation for a much greater place, that of St. Assise, a domain belonging to Monsieur the King's brother, a great estate, populous with game, and with a mansion containing 300 bedrooms. For this she engaged to pay £53,000 in instalments, of which, it is said, only the first was paid at her death. It is related that during the first week of her possession 500 guineas worth of rabbits were killed on this estate.

Elizabeth's prevailing weakness was obviously a feverish restlessness. "I should despise my-

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

self," she once said, "were I two hours in the same temper." That, doubtless, supplies a reason for her peregrinations about the continent, and, incidentally, for her victimization by half the adventurers of Europe. Among these was the ingenious and interesting rascal who assumed the style and title of Stephan Annibale, Prince d'Albanie, but who was the son of an honest dealer in mules and *bagigi*, or children's sweetmeats, of the name of Zannowitch, hailing from some obscure corner of the Balkans. Elizabeth met this rogue in the guise of a pilgrim on one of her expeditions, and his manners and air of mystery attracting her, the pair became fast friends, so much so that the pilgrim declared his royal lineage, his friendship with the most exalted personages of his own rank, and the reasons for his travelling incognito as poor Wortá the pilgrim. His history, in fact, was so full of romance, and so like her own, that an affinity declared itself, and there seems little doubt that a marriage between the pair would have resulted, but for that unaccommodating clause in the Duke's will. It was only Elizabeth's good fortune which saved her from the enterprising Wortá; as it was, there was a long and affectionate correspondence, and the disguised prince did not fail to draw upon his innamorata in the most trustful manner for very comfortable sums, his drafts being always honoured. There was a projected journey of the couple together through Germany,

## A MAID OF HONOUR

during which Elizabeth was to be robbed of her jewels and money, a plot which the prince had arranged with a maid whom he had recommended to Elizabeth, when, by a crowning mercy, his highness, having been chased by the police from one country to another, was finally laid by the heels in Holland on a charge of forgery, where he obligingly took a dose of poison. Elizabeth's letters to this rascal have lately been unearthed from the Dutch criminal archives by an erudite French historian, and may be read in a very interesting study of "Prince Stephan" in *La Nouvelle Revue* for October 1898.

It is noteworthy that Elizabeth seems to have made no attempt to renew her relations with her great friends at the Prussian and Saxon courts. It is true that she wrote to King Frederic in great affliction at the time of the trial; she was "overwhelmed," she said, "by trouble like David of old, but there were princes graciously inclined, like David, to succour the oppressed." The Electress of Saxony was disposed to find all sorts of excuses for her friend. "Poor thing," she said, "she was so young when she made that first marriage." Frederic was quite affable, and offered Berlin as an asylum, where, as he assured her through the Prussian minister in London, her property, if transmitted to his capital, would be perfectly safe. Elizabeth, however, was quite ungrateful for this kindness. "The King of

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

Prussia is devilishly clever," she remarked to a friend, "but I shall not trust him." These unworthy suspicions were, perhaps, a reason for her avoiding Berlin and Dresden, but upon one of her visits to St. Petersburg she took occasion to renew her acquaintance with a friend whom she had once met at the Saxon court.

This was Prince Radzivil, who had some pretensions to the crown of Poland, and seems to have been much interested in the lady, and to have corresponded with her for years. She now announced her intention of taking his Highness's dominions on her way back from the Russian capital, and it is said that the Prince, whose affection was undiminished by time, looked upon the visit as likely to realize his fondest hopes. He certainly prepared for her on a scale which has scarcely been exceeded since Solomon met the Queen of Sheba. Berge, a village in one of the Prince's duchies, about forty miles from Riga, was the place of this happy meeting. The Prince, though begging Elizabeth to let him wait upon her without ceremony, appeared with a retinue which filled forty carriages of six horses each, and provided riders for six hundred horses, besides a guard of hussars. The entire nobility of his principality waited on this plain Devonshire woman of sixty; she slept in a new palace every night during her visit of a fortnight; he built a complete village of wooden houses in which to entertain her

## A MAID OF HONOUR

at a banquet and rural fair; she was escorted by guards of honour bearing torches to her place of rest each night; there were midnight boar-hunts, in which the quarry was driven into a circle of lighted torches to be dispatched before her eyes; the whole country blazed nightly with bonfires and fireworks; never was known such feasting, such dancing, such joyous salvoes of artillery. "He may fire as much as he pleases," said Elizabeth to one of her suite, after one of these complimentary detonations, "but he shall not hit my mark." And so she left the confiding gentleman much the poorer by the expenses of this royal entertainment and by a profusion of costly presents which he heaped upon her.

It is difficult even to suggest a reason for Elizabeth's success with this sort of company; all the particulars of her manners and personality that have survived in numerous contemporary memoirs are of a vulgar character, even coarse and disgusting. Yet she moved about from the establishment of one great personage to another, and was treated by all like a queen. A Polish bishop of Wilna is said to have been among her ardent admirers, a band which also included the Patriarch of Jerusalem, whom she met at Rome, and who shared the enthusiasm of Pope Clement for her person and conversation. After her royal entertainment by Prince Radzivil, she dropped in, so to speak, upon Count Oginski, the "Ornament of Human



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

Nature," as Frederic of Prussia called him in his enthusiastic way, the friend of the French king, the enlightened patron of the arts, the accomplished artist and musician, the Crichton of his times, in fact. If we are to believe her biographer, there was the greatest emulation for her hand between the accomplished Count and Radzivil, who accompanied her. However this may have been, it is certain that she was again royally entertained. But Elizabeth had either seen too much of matrimony, or preferred her independence and her dear Duke's estate to the glory of either of these alliances, for she remained fancy free to the end of the chapter.

This came rather suddenly in 1778. The widow was at dinner at St. Assise when a servant entered with the news that some litigation in which she had been long engaged had gone against her. This threw her into a violent passion, which broke an internal blood-vessel. She refused to lie by, disregarded the doctor's orders to abstain from wine, drank two glasses of Madeira, lay on a sofa and expired during her sleep without a struggle, so gently, indeed, that her maid who held her hand knew only of her passing by its coldness. Some little reparation to the Duke's family she had made by receiving her old antagonist, Evelyn Pierrepont, into favour, paying his debts, giving him £500 a year, and making him the legatee of her personal property, which was considerable in

## A MAID OF HONOUR

spite of her dissipation. The landed estate went, by the Duke's will, to the younger brother, Charles Meadows. This gentleman assumed the name of Pierrepont, was ennobled, and the family name of the Dukes of Kingston survives to-day in the patronymic of the Earls of Manvers.



V  
THE COMPLETE GAMESTER



## V

### THE COMPLETE GAMESTER

THERE are few great figures of English history whose characters display richer contrasts than that of Charles Fox. "Fox had three passions," said one of his friends, "women, play, and politics, yet he never formed a creditable connection with a woman, he squandered all his means at the gaming-table, and except for eleven months, he was constantly in Opposition." That estimate of Fox's career came to be modified before he died, but it was fairly accurate at the time it was uttered. His contemporaries during his early manhood could not fail to be struck with some of the contradictions of his character. On the one hand was the inspired orator of the House of Commons, the prophet of a great political party, the personal opponent during twenty years of the court and King George. On the other was a ruined spendthrift sunk under a load of debt almost before he was out of his 'teens, whose furniture went down St. James's Street in the bailiffs' carts at regular intervals, who had lost fortune after fortune of his own and had compromised the estates of half his

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

acquaintance by his reckless folly, and yet was regarded as the best of good fellows by his victims, and was almost adored by everybody who came in contact with him.

Most of the qualities which went to make up that complex character were displayed very completely at Brooks's, the old club in St. James's Street which has now lighted its candles continuously for just a hundred and forty-five years. Fox was the presiding genius of the early Brooks's. The club may be regarded as his home during the first twenty years of his career. Here the extraordinary charm of his manner drew his friends around him, and converted a society which at first lacked all colour of politics into the citadel of his party. At Brooks's, above all, Fox developed that passion for high play which made him the very prototype of all gamesters and kept him in a chronic state of distress which would have submerged a weaker nature, until at the age of near fifty he was rescued by a subscription of £70,000 among his friends at the club.

Those same exploits of Fox at the hazard and faro tables at Brooks's are well known, but they have perhaps received less attention than might have been expected. Fox's biographers, from Lord Holland to Sir George Trevelyan, naturally, and perhaps properly, treat the subject with delicacy. The enormous extent of Fox's transactions at the play-tables is of course recorded,

## THE COMPLETE GAMESTER

and although there has been no desire to withhold such censure as his conduct in this particular seemed to deserve, the very magnitude of his dealings in dice and cards has caused some inaccurate inferences to be drawn, and as a consequence has led to the establishment of a very erroneous tradition. That tradition, which can be traced to the daintiness with which Fox's biographers have dealt with the subject, was undoubtedly perpetuated by one of his contemporaries, in whose words it is best stated. The last Lord Egremont, the Maecenas of Petworth, a nobleman universally beloved who died early in the reign of Queen Victoria, told Lord Holland, Fox's nephew and biographer,

"That he was convicted by reflection aided by his subsequent experience of the world that there was at that time some *unfair confederacy among some of the players, and that the great losers, especially Mr. Fox, were actually duped and cheated*. He would, he said, have been torn in pieces and stoned by the losers themselves for even hinting such a thing at the time. He was nevertheless satisfied that the immoderate, constant, and unparalleled advantage over Charles Fox and other young men were not to be accounted for by the difference in passing or holding the box or the hazard of the die. He had indeed no suspicion any more than the rest at the time, but he had thought it much over since, and now had."



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

These speculations of Lord Egremont upon events which had happened half-a-century earlier, unsupported as they are by any evidence, would have attracted little notice had they not been quoted by Lord Holland in the Memorials of his uncle in support of the tradition we have mentioned. But it will be seen that the acceptance of Lord Egremont's suggestion concerns more reputations than one. The gaming at which Fox is supposed to have suffered took place almost exclusively at Brooks's, and if indeed he was victimized, it was at the hands of members of that club. Many of these were of great station and all of unsullied reputation. There was no question of meeting at Brooks's the adventurers who swarmed at the public gaming-tables of the coffee-houses. The club from the first was an exclusive society of gentlemen, and if there was any unfair confederacy among the members who met Charles Fox at its play-tables, the fame of many notable men of that day is besmirched. But a consideration of the evidence which has gradually accumulated upon the details of Fox's private life will, we think, remove all such doubts and will supply ample explanations of the derangement which existed in his finances in his own conduct, without involving that of others.

Fox's career as a gamester may be divided into two distinct periods. For about ten years following 1768, when at the age of nineteen he first

## THE COMPLETE GAMESTER

appeared as a man about town, the male society of the day was wholly given up to a rage for hazard. The game was played for enormous stakes both at the public gaming-tables and at private assemblies. But the chief scene of high play between gentlemen was at Almack's, a club named after its first proprietor, which was the parent of the present Brooks's, and had been opened in 1764 on the site of the Marlborough Club in Pall Mall. Young Fox immediately took his place among the band of choice spirits who made Almack's their rendezvous, and became and remained a chief exponent of hazard until its vogue expired in favour of faro shortly before 1780.

Almack's had been founded by twenty-seven young men of good birth, all under twenty-five years of age, with the single object of providing a meeting-place where they might indulge their passion for high play undisturbed. That object is abundantly clear from the original rules. These prescribed that no one should sit down at the tables without a substantial sum in gold before him; they suggest also that every room in the club was devoted to gambling in one form or another, for there is an enactment that "No gaming be permitted in the eating-room except tossing for reckonings, on penalty of paying the whole bill of the members present."• So well were these rules adapted to their purpose that

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

Horace Walpole declared there was usually a sum of £10,000 on the table in bullion, and the club had not been going a year before the town began to ring with the exploits of the generous youth who haunted its rooms to the despair of their parents and guardians.

When young Fox joined Almack's, in 1768, there was already assembled a compact band of gamblers who devoted themselves to hazard Sundays and weekdays throughout the season. It was among these men that Fox took his place, and if, as Lord Egremont suggested, he was duped and cheated, it was at the hands of these men that he suffered, and we must choose among a very good company for the betrayers of his youth and innocence. The habitual frequenters of the hazard-room at Almack's were such men as the Duke of Buccleuch, Lord Melbourne, Lord Derby, Lord Cholmondeley, Lord Clermont, Admiral Rodney and Admiral Pigott, General Burgoyne and General Scott, Lord Harrington and Sir Thomas Clarges. To these we may add the group of young men who surrounded George Selwyn, with that gentleman at their head, Richard Fitzpatrick and his brother, Lord Upper Ossory, Lord Carlisle, Lord March, Sir Charles Bunbury, Lord Bolingbroke and his brother Mr. St. John, Storer, Hare, Boothby and "Fish" Craufurd. Last came the Fox group, Charles himself, his brother Stephen, and his cousin young

## THE COMPLETE GAMESTER

Lord Stavordale, one of the boldest of all the plungers.

It is surely inconceivable that such men as these should have conspired to cheat Fox or any one else. Hazard, moreover, was a game at which cheating was impossible except by the use of loaded dice. It was a game of pure chance at which the novice met the most case-hardened of gamesters on equal terms, except perhaps in the all-important matter of knowing when to stop. But there is ample evidence of the ruin which the practice of the game spread among the players. The stakes were enormous. Lord Carlisle lost £10,000 at one cast at the club, a sum in no way exceptional if we are to judge by a remark made by Lord Stavordale. That young gentleman won the same amount at a throw at the Cocoa Tree and "swore a great oath saying 'If I had been playing deep, I might have won millions.'" Obviously transactions of this sort required capital on a lordly scale, and the younger men at Almack's soon discovered a way of supplying their wants. They would go to the usurers for large sums of ready money. Their expectations would be duly weighed by those gentry, and the advance made in exchange for a bond which guaranteed the payment of an annuity to cover the repayment of capital with interest reckoned on a generous scale. We may form some idea of the aggregate amount of these transactions from

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

a remark of Horace Walpole, who noted in 1772 that there were advertised to be sold "more annuities of Charles Fox and his society." This particular sale was to secure the payment of £500,000 a year.

Hazard at Almack's, indeed, was played with money borrowed by the players at ruinous interest, and there is little need to search for other causes of the disaster which it brought into the affairs of the men who devoted their lives to the game. The general effect of the play at Almack's can best be followed in the Selwyn correspondence. As one man felt the pressure of a debt of honour he was forced to apply to friends who owed him sums on a like account. We may read how Lord Derby, "having lost a very monstrous sum of money," took the liberty of applying to Selwyn for a debt which he owed him; how Fitzpatrick, approached by Selwyn with the same object, would have "coined his heart and dropped his blood into drachmas" had he been able, but as it was he could not raise a guinea. We learn too that Admiral Rodney had to run off to France to avoid the bailiffs, and that his wife, coming over to try to raise a fund among his club-mates to enable him to return, failed utterly. We may note also that a temporary withdrawal from the hazard-room was pleasantly known as "fattening," and the inevitable catastrophe of the return as "cutting up."

## THE COMPLETE GAMESTER

Such letters as these reflect some of the difficulties of Fox's companions at Brooks's; there is less need to seek additional causes for his own embarrassment because he started life encumbered with a heavy load of debt which he had incurred at nearly every capital on the continent during the grand tour. Hazard, moreover, was only one of his dissipations, his routine included riotous living in every phase of the life of his day. A typical instance is recorded by both Walpole and Gibbon. Fox sat down one evening at Brooks's at seven in the evening and played till five on the following afternoon. He then went to the House of Commons and delivered a speech upon the Church Bill. "Charles Fox prepared himself for that holy work," says Gibbon, "by passing twenty-two hours in the pious exercise of hazard." After the debate he went to White's, where he drank till seven in the morning. A few hours later he returned to Brooks's, where he won £6000 at hazard, and between three and four in the afternoon he left London for the races at Newmarket.

This was obviously a wasteful mode of life which would require a large fortune to maintain, while as a fact Fox never had a shilling of his own after he was grown up. Lord Holland's last years were spent in trying to redeem the liabilities incurred by his sons, and when in 1774 he died, everything he left to Charles was already fore-stalled, and that young man was also under heavy,

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

obligations to half his friends. The estate of Kingsgate was seized by his creditors, and a sinecure office of £2000 a year, to which he had succeeded on the death of his brother Stephen, went the same way. As to his obligations to his acquaintances their extent is suggested at least by a remark of Walpole, who, in mentioning an attempted settlement of Charles's debts by Lord Holland a few months before his death, says, "The arrangement aimed at paying all Charles's debts with the exception of a trifle of £30,000 and those of Lord Carlisle, Crewe, and Foley, who being friends, not Jews, may wait."

So far, indeed, from Fox being the victim of his companions, it was some of these who enabled him to keep his place at the gaming-tables; it is clear, too, that he often assumed a very jaunty attitude in face of his liabilities to them. There was Lord Carlisle's case for example. That young nobleman had stood security for an advance by a money-lender to Fox for a sum of £15,000. Carlisle himself was embarrassed and sought relief from the payment of the annuity upon the borrowed money. Selwyn, as a friend of both parties, endeavoured to bring about a settlement and called upon Fox to suggest a discharge of Carlisle's claim. "I was answered only by an elevation *de ses epaules et une grimace*," he writes, and continues bitterly, "the Messieurs Fox were born for great stations, they were educated

## THE COMPLETE GAMESTER

with great indulgence, and if the Jews won't pay for them the Gentiles must." Selwyn even exhorted Carlisle to resist the payment of the annuity: "Let them sell your furniture to call attention to the scandal. In a very little time a demand upon you will be as good as an accepted draft on Child's shop."

Without having been able absolutely to disprove Lord Egremont's deliberate statement that Fox was cheated at hazard, we have perhaps suggested other causes for the dispersal of his fortune during the vogue of that game. But in coming to the second period of his career as a gamester we have the advantage of a remarkable series of letters which were written to Lord Carlisle, from 1780 onwards, by Fox's own companions at the club, Selwyn, Hare, and Storer. These letters are rich in details of the life at Brooks's during the rage for faro which succeeded that for hazard, and unless we are to suppose that Fox changed his disposition and his habits in a moment, they serve to throw a retrospective light upon the period we have already examined in which details are scarce. In any case they dispose altogether of the suggestion that Fox was the victim of his companions after 1780; on the contrary, they establish the fact that he was the winner of enormous sums at Brooks's, and they remove him once and for all from the category of the pigeons.



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

Hazard suffered a decline in favour among gentlemen during the few years preceding 1780, and the gamblers at Brooks's were at that time looking out for another game to take its place. The fame of the doings at hazard at the club had not been lost upon humbler societies elsewhere, and dicing had descended to low companies of scoundrels at disreputable taverns and coffee-houses where cheating was general. All sorts of ruffians congregated at these places, disputes were of daily occurrence in which men often lost their lives, and the results were constantly before coroners and police magistrates. As a consequence hazard lost favour as a game for gentlemen; certainly at Brooks's it was discarded in favour of faro.

Faro, a simplified form of basset, a game which had a great vogue in England under the Stuarts, was played between a dealer, who kept the bank, and the rest of the company. In essentials it was perfectly simple, and much resembled the *Self and Company* still played by children. But there were many variations which made the game attractive to all sorts of players from the most cautious to the most reckless. Ostensibly it was fair as between dealer and the rest of the company, but as a fact it was not so. Ties paid the dealer, the last card of the pack was his in any event, and there were certain collective advantages known as "the pull of the table," which

## THE COMPLETE GAMESTER

made the running of a faro-bank a very profitable concern.

The game was introduced at Brooks's by Charles Fox and his friend Fitzpatrick, who had already been associated as partners at the club during the hazard period. In January of 1780 we read of the pair setting up the first faro-table at Brooks's: "*C'est une banque de fondation*," wrote Selwyn to Carlisle, "*Messieurs Charles et Richard en sont les fondateurs*, or at least that is my opinion." Before many weeks had passed the partnership was avowed, and it was soon clear to the town that all the glories of hazard were to be revived at Fox and Fitzpatrick's faro-bank. The concern had not been running three months before London became vocal about the ravages of the partnership upon the pockets of the rest of the company. Selwyn himself, one of the most seasoned of the older set at the club, was among its first victims. We find Storer writing to Carlisle that he was afraid to speak to George upon the subject of faro, "he was so *larmoyant* the other morning over his losses." A month or so later we have the advantage of Selwyn's remarks upon Storer in the same connection: "Storer was out of spirits after he had been losing his money like a simple boy at Charles and Richard's d——d faro-bank, which swallows up everybody's cash who comes to Brooks's." Lord Robert Spencer and his brother Lord Edward were other victims. Their brother

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

the Duke of Marlborough came to their assistance, but very much to his own embarrassment. "The Duke says he cannot now give one-third to his younger children of what he has given to his two brothers, who have left him to be seduced by Charles Fox. Here is a Fox running off a second time with their geese from Marlborough House, as the old Duchess used to say."

Fox's success at the new game was so striking that it encouraged competitors. Early in the season of 1781 Walpole wrote—

"My nephew Lord Cholmondeley, the banker *à la mode*, has been demolished. He and his associate, Sir Willoughby Aston, went early the other night to Brooks's before Charles Fox and Fitzpatrick were come and set up a faro-bank, but they soon arrived, attacked their rivals, broke the bank, and won above £4000. 'There,' said Fox, 'so should all usurpers be served.'"

Fox indeed, like the Turk, would bear no brother near the throne. He and Fitzpatrick resolved to keep the lucrative business of faro at Brooks's to themselves. To this end they decided to discourage competition by broadening the basis of the firm, and in 1781 they took in as junior partners men who were potential rivals at the club. These were Fox's great friend Hare, Lord Robert Spencer (the victim of the previous year), and a gentleman who goes by the name of Trusty in the Carlisle letters. These three had



"Faro"



## THE COMPLETE GAMESTER

each a twelfth share in the profits, Fox and Fitzpatrick dividing the remaining nine-twelfths. In addition the juniors were conceded a special allowance for dealing, a guinea for each deal at first, subsequently reduced "by an edict of Charles" to five guineas the hour, which is, perhaps, an index to the magnitude of the transactions of the firm. The heads of the concern were still the chief operators, but the junior partners were expected to relieve them whenever required, and to keep the game going as long as a single punter could be found to lay a stake.

That this is no exaggeration is plain from the accounts of some prolonged sittings which attracted attention in 1781.

"Yesterday [wrote Selwyn in May] I saw a hackney coach which announced a late sitting. I had the curiosity to inquire how things were, and found Richard in his faro pulpit where he had been alternately with Charles since the evening before, dealing to Admiral Pigott only."

A week later the Admiral matched himself against the bank single-handed throughout a sitting of twenty-four hours. "The account brought to White's about supper-time was that he had rose to eat a mutton-chop, but that merits confirmation," is Selwyn's jocular comment in the style of the news-sheets of those days.

It is not surprising to find that a business so

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

carefully founded and so diligently conducted had a gratifying success. When Fox's political duties required his presence in the House of Commons, or his pleasure took him to Newmarket, or if Fitzpatrick was with his regiment, Lord Robert Spencer, Mr. Hare, or Mr. Trusty stepped into the vacant place and continued the business of the firm. The calls of this business were so well understood that the partners were never asked to dine at the same hour. Selwyn gave a party which included the bankers. "The two not on duty come here at five," he wrote, "and when the other two come off they will find *des réchauffées*." During the season of 1781-2 there was scarcely any cessation of play. "The vestal fire," wrote Storer, "is perpetually kept up, and they, like salamanders, flourish in the flames." The bankers' coaches were never ordered until six in the morning, and the fluctuations of the play were the subject of a paragraph in every letter. "The rise and fall of the bank is not yet added to the other stocks in the morning paper," wrote Selwyn, "but it is frequently declared from the windows to passers-by."

An immediate effect of the faro at Brooks's was a surprising change in Fox's affairs, a rise from indigence to affluence which was at once reflected in his personal appearance and in his surroundings. Selwyn returned after a few days' absence from town to find

## THE COMPLETE GAMESTER

"Charles elbow-deep in gold who but a few days ago wanted a guinea. . . . He is in high spirits and cash, pays and loses and wins and performs all feats to make his *roman* complete. I never saw such a transition from distress to opulency, from dirt to cleanliness. I saw Charles to-day in a new hat, frock, waistcoat, shirt and stockings. He was as clean and smug as a gentleman; if he is at last a field-preacher, I shall not be surprised."

Fox's house became resplendent with paint and varnish; he bought racehorses for sums he was ashamed to own; he even began to pay his debts. At the end of 1781 he owed to Selwyn that his share of the winnings amounted to £30,000, a sum obtained solely from his club-mates at Brooks's which supported him in all sorts of excesses elsewhere. He and Fitzpatrick would leave the conduct of the game to their juniors and go down to Kenny's in Pall Mall to take a fling at hazard, lose £5000 at a sitting, and, wonder of all, pay their losses at the time. Fox confessed to losing £10,000 at the October meeting at Newmarket, and he mentioned to Selwyn, as a matter of no importance, that he had lost £8000 in two days "at various sports."

It is worthy of note that this period of fruitful activity at Brooks's coincided exactly with Fox's most inspired moments as a politician. His oratory in the House of Commons was already shaking the Government and the time was nearly ripe for the return of Lord Rockingham to power.



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

with Fox himself as a minister. The contrast between the inspired orator at Westminster and the faro-banker at Brooks's was not lost upon the town. The town indeed could not miss it, so unblushing and so public were the exploits of the partners at the club.

"The pharaoh bank [writes Selwyn] is held in a manner which being so exposed to public view bids defiance to all decency and police. The whole town as it passes views the dealers and the punters by means of the candles and windows being level with the ground. They remind me of all the little porpoises which you see leaping into the great one's mouth in the *ombres chinoises*."

The contrast between the private and political life of Fox, indeed, forced itself upon the notice of some of the austerer spirits of his party. "The Opposition, who have Charles for their ablest advocate," says Selwyn, "are quite ashamed of the proceedings and hate to have them mentioned." It was the occasion, too, for much baseless scandal which need not be repeated here, and at the end of the season of 1782 there was a general feeling that faro at Brooks's was altogether too one-sided a game, and Selwyn records his doubts "whether the people at Brooks's will suffer this pillage another season."

As a fact they suffered many more, though the return of the Whigs to power was the signal for Fox to withdraw from any active part in the con-

## THE COMPLETE GAMESTER

cern. "Spencer and Hare held the bank last night," writes Selwyn, "but the Secretary's name is ordered to be left out of that commission, so ostensibly he has no more to do with it." This is partly confirmatory of Lord Holland's statement that during Fox's spell of office he never touched a dice or a card. As, however, his term of office lasted just four months on this occasion and seven during the Coalition of 1783, the point does not seem of vast importance. It is quite certain that the bank was carried on, and that it was the parent of others quite as successful. There is ample evidence that Fox was the centre of the faro at Brooks's until 1787 at least, and it is important to remember that he was a banker throughout the years during which he played the game. The extent of his share of the winnings may perhaps be gauged by the luck of his junior Lord Robert Spencer, who retired a little later with a fortune with which he purchased a landed estate at Woolbeding.

Who, then, were the victims? The answer to that question is, "All the men who played faro at the club with the exception of some half-dozen who ran the banks." A very superficial acquaintance with the private correspondence of the times is convincing upon the point. The male society of that day was embarrassed and set by the ears by their losses at Brooks's: Selwyn and his friends, Sir Godfrey Webster, Sir Charles Bun-

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

bury, Lord Monson, Sir J. Ramsden, Lord Bessborough and his son Lord Duncannon, Lord Surrey, Lord Derby, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Clermont, Lord Burford, Lord Drogheda, royal princes like the Duke of York, eminent foreigners like the Duke of Orleans and the Duc de Lauzun, Admiral Pigott, Lord Thanet, and Lord Foley. Some of these had the resolution to set moderate limits to their play, but the regular loss of a few hundreds by each of the rank and file provided a handsome income for the bankers. Of others, whose recklessness knew no bounds, the estates and the descendants are suffering to-day. Typical of these was Lord Foley, who died with a heavily charged estate and without a shilling in 1793. He had started life not many years before with an unencumbered property, an income of £18,000 a year, and £100,000 in ready money.

It may be further asked what became of Fox's winnings. Here again, the particulars of his private life, and some well-known peculiarities of his temperament, supply a complete answer. Fox was submerged as a youth, and nothing but a life of strict economy and a large income could have put him straight again; but he was a spendthrift by nature, incapable of keeping a shilling in his pocket, and a man, moreover, who ran through the gamut of dissipation in every form until he arrived at middle age. Knowing what we do of his life, another question is perhaps the more pertinent.

## THE COMPLETE GAMESTER

Whence, after his father's death in 1774, came the funds to provide for his royal extravagance? The answer is that he was supported for years by the losses of his club-mates at Brooks's, the very men who according to Lord Egremont conspired to cheat him.

That his lordship was perfectly sincere in his opinion there can be no doubt, but his remarks were evidently inspired by a good-natured desire to find some excuse for the shortcomings of a great Englishman whose enemies even acknowledged at the last that his virtues were all his own and his vices only assumed. Fox's virtues and vices have long since been weighed in the balance, and the fact that his reputation has survived the ordeal is a proof of his real greatness. The fame of a lesser nature than his would have been extinguished by the astonishing record of his follies.



VI

THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL



## VI

### THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

THERE came upon the town under the patronage of the Prince of Wales in the year 1794 a young fellow of sixteen who was destined to a very remarkable career. The Prince, as honorary Colonel of the Tenth Hussars, had presented the boy with a commission in that fashionable regiment, and young Mr. Brummell may thus be said to have entered life under very distinguished auspices, of which, to do him justice, he was not slow to take advantage. He gained no military distinction, it is true, though the times offered great chances for young gentlemen of spirit entering the army, and there was many a young officer, afterwards known to fame, learning the goose-step in the year 1794. As a fact, Mr. George Brummell quitted the service within four years, and, so far as can be learned, his only military feat was performed as one of the escort which in 1795 conducted his royal patron's luckless bride, Princess Caroline, from Greenwich to her dismal wedding at St. James's. Mr. Brummell's avocations, therefore, were eminently peaceful,



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

and it was upon no stricken field in Spain or Flanders that he gained his prodigious reputation. Yet it is probable that to a large section of the society of that day the position attained by Mr. Brummell at the age of five-and-twenty presented greater attractions than military renown, however distinguished. Lord Byron declared candidly that he would have rather been Brummell than Napoleon Bonaparte. Whether his lordship's remark is a proof of his judgment may be doubted, but of Brummell's social splendour there is no doubt whatever. At that early age an exclusive and rich aristocracy was at his feet; his royal patron was affected to tears when this paragon differed with him upon a matter of taste; the proudest ladies in England were grateful to him for a word of civility to their daughters. As for tradesmen, his patronage of jewellers, tailors and tobacconists made their fortunes, though he rarely paid their bills. Considering his origin, and the epoch in which he flourished, George Bryan Brummell must be regarded as a phenomenon. There is record of others of his calling, of course, in the annals of most nations since history began, but the great dandies of history, from Alcibiades downwards, have had other and greater qualities than those of exquisite deportment; they have been soldiers, statesmen, poets or scholars. Brummell was none of these; yet he reigned supreme in British society for near twenty years.

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

and he founded a dynasty of social despots to succeed him whose power is remembered by people still living. Solemn biographies have been written about Brummell and his career, and treatises on the cult of dandyism which he founded are not rare, especially in France, where its splendour excited great admiration. For us the famous beau and his success have a particular interest, for they may be regarded, though in a limited aspect, as the very blossom of one of the periods we seek to illustrate; that of the Regency. There is probably nothing more to appear about Brummell; the memoir writers and the correspondents and diarists of his time have done their best for him; he has been dead nearly seventy years, and his real career closed a quarter of a century earlier. So the time seems ripe for an impartial estimate of his character.

The young man who was destined to the position of arbiter of social life in England at a time when social caste was of a very inflexible texture, and classes were more sharply divided than at present, certainly owed nothing of his success to any advantage of birth. George Bryan Brummell came of respectable parentage, but his origin was distinctly middle-class. His grandfather, William Brummell, was a tradesman, a confectioner, it is said, who lived in Bury Street, St. James's, and had been at one time a servant to Mr. Charles Monson, brother of the first peer of

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

that name. William was accustomed to add to his income by letting lodgings at his house in Bury Street, and had a son, another William, an industrious and capable boy, who, among other accomplishments, wrote a very excellent hand. His penmanship, in fact, was displayed to such advantage in the notice of "Apartments to Let" which was exposed in the window in Bury Street, that it is said to have attracted the attention of Mr. Charles Jenkinson, afterwards Earl of Liverpool, and at the time a politician of some note in the early governments of King George the Third. In any case, Mr. Jenkinson took rooms with old Brummell in Bury Street, and in so doing founded the modest fortunes of the Brummell family.

Mr. Jenkinson, who became an under-secretary in the Duke of Newcastle's administration in 1761, was then, and later, a very busy gentleman, and he found young William Brummell, with his nice handwriting and general intelligence and obliging disposition, a great help in his correspondence. It was not long before he offered the boy regular employment as his amanuensis, and himself getting promotion as Secretary of the Treasury a year or two later, bestowed a clerkship in that department upon young Brummell, who thus took a first step which led on to fortune. Jenkinson recommended the young clerk for his intelligence and industry to Lord North, who in 1767 made him his private secretary, and William

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

Brummell shared the fortunes of that minister, and was thenceforward in the centre of great affairs. Brummell's work appears little in the annals of the time, but there is no doubt he was the minister's right-hand man. It is recorded that when London lay at the mercy of Lord George Gordon's mob in 1780, and his lordship was so concerned at the aspect of affairs that he found it necessary to consult his chief adversary, Mr. Charles James Fox, at a secret meeting arranged by Mr. Sheridan behind the scenes of his theatre, it was William Brummell who attended the minister at his conference with those statesmen.

William Brummell thus started well in life, improved his prospects by a judicious marriage, the lady of his choice being a Miss Richardson, daughter of a gentleman official of the Lottery Office. The Richardsons claimed descent from some legal big-wig of the time of James the First, the young lady's father was a friend of Mr. Thomas Coutts the banker, and "an expensive man about town," and was inclined to look askance at the pretensions of the Treasury Clerk to be his son-in-law. But his objections were overcome, the marriage duly took place, and the Richardsons assuredly never regretted it. In 1788 William Brummell was able to retire to a country house in Berkshire, became high sheriff of that county, and bore the reputation of great charity. He was a man of substance, of a liberal

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

hospitality and of general good report, and numbered men like Fox and Sheridan among his friends. When his time came, in 1793, he was still in possession of receiverships, comptroller-ships and other sinecures which were the privilege of the fortunate in those comfortable days, worth altogether £2500 a year, and left a considerable fortune to be divided among his two sons and daughter. George's share was £30,000, which, however, he was not allowed to handle until he attained his twentieth year.

There was thus no mystery about the origin of Beau Brummell; the history of his family, indeed, was to be read, and may perhaps still be read, on their gravestones in the churchyards of St. James's and St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. To do the Beau justice, he never made any secret about it. In his later years he used to swear "by the graves of my humble ancestors lying in their parish churchyards"; even in the days of his prosperity he had no delicacy in alluding to the unfashionable status of his forebears. He was once asked of his father and mother, "Dead years ago," was the reply, "the poor old creatures both cut their own throats eating peas with a knife."

Young Brummell went early to Eton, where he seems to have been generally liked. When only a few years later he was established in London as a social autocrat, many men of his own age

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

recalled the good-natured school-boy, popular with his masters, his dame and his school-fellows. Dr. Goodall and his own tutor Hawtree both petted him. He was remarkable for good humour, ready wit, and a love of fun, as well as for neatness in dress and a gentleman-like demeanour. He was the leading spirit in a serenade under the window of a daughter of one of the masters, the music of which consisted of a French horn, a triangle and a hurdy-gurdy. His chief school friends were Lord Lake, George Leigh, Jack Musters and Berkeley Craven. "A clever, frank boy, not in the least conceited," was the report of his fag-master in later years. "I knew him well, sir," said another school-fellow, "he was never flogged, and a man, sir, is not worth a damn who is never flogged at school." There were indications, none the less, of his future eminence as a man of fashion. It was early noticed that he avoided the muddy streets on rainy days, and was particularly careful in his dress. There is a tradition of young "Buck Brummell," as he came to be called at Eton, in a white stock with a gold buckle on the back of the neck, which seems prophetic of some of the later glories of Chesterfield Street. His mental attitude towards the rougher aspect of the world also seems to have attained a certain refinement, if one may judge by a story of those schooldays. There was a row in the town between a band of the schoolboys and some

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

young bargees, in which one of the latter remained as prisoner of war. A court-martial decided that he should be thrown over Windsor Bridge into the Thames, but Brummell interfered. "The fellow," he said, "is in such a high state of perspiration that he will certainly catch cold,"

Brummell went from Eton to Oxford, where at Oriel he was less popular. He seems to have dropped his simplicity, and was soon accused of being a tuft-hunter. He cut one old Eton acquaintance because he found him at an inferior college; another of his own, because he asked him to meet some young man whom he did not consider of sufficient social importance. Thus early did Brummell adopt those pretensions which later stood him in such good stead. He still kept a reputation for wit, and was the supposed author of half the squibs written during his time, but he did no work and entered for the Newdigate, for which he was second, simply because his friends declared that he was incapable of any serious effort. But little is really known of Brummell at Oxford, where, to be sure, he remained for less than twelve months, and that little is preserved in Lister's *Granby*, which, however, was accepted at the time as authentic. If that be the fact, his short career at Oriel would appear to have been characterized by what to-day might be called swagger, tempered with a certain amount of humour. He would ostentatiously order his horse

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

at hall-time, but there was a certain humorous quality about a prank of his when he turned a tame jackdaw into the quad, which walked and pecked solemnly over the grass with a pair of white bands round its neck, and reminded all who saw it of Brummell's tutor.

There are many different accounts of his introduction to the Prince of Wales. Brummell himself used to say that he was presented to his Royal Highness on the terrace at Windsor Castle while at Eton, and that the Prince, hearing later of his reputation for wit and great social gifts, renewed the acquaintance in London, and was so pleased with the boy's bearing that he presented him with his commission in the Tenth Hussars. Another account places the first meeting at a little dairy in the Green Park, where it was the fashion of that day to call and drink syllabubs made from the milk of the red cows which grazed in the park. The keeping of these cows was a privilege bestowed by George the Third upon two old ladies, sisters, named Searle, who were aunts of the Beau, and were accustomed to dispense their syllabubs to the quality in a rustic lodge which stood in the park opposite Clarges Street. Here was Brummell one morning when the Prince happened to call with the Marchioness of Salisbury, and, being pleased with the self-possession of the youth, presented him with his pair of colours in the Tenth as a



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

token of his Royal Highness's approbation and regard. The manner of the first meeting of these two potentates, however, is not of great importance. What is certain is that Brummell joined the Tenth on the 10th of June 1794, under the auspices of the Prince, and as an accepted disciple of that great master of deportment, Brummell being sixteen at the time and the Prince thirty-two. It is equally certain that before ten years were out there was no place for two such stars of fashion in the same firmament.

Brummell, as might be expected, took his military duties very lightly, and his immediate intimacy with the Prince which followed the commission, provided a reason, if not an excuse, for a general slackness of duty and a frequent lateness on parade. His regiment was always quartered either in London or at Brighton, and the attractions of Carlton House or the Pavilion, and the august nature of the commands which took him to one or other of those palaces at frequent intervals, were perhaps taken into account by his superior officers, and saved him from the reprimand and discipline which were assuredly the lot of less highly favoured subalterns. In any case it was said that the boy did not know his own troop, with the single exception of a front-rank man with a blue nose, by whom he steered when late on parade, and who in consequence came to be pleasantly known as the Beau's Beacon. It is



George Bryan Brummell



## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

recorded, too, that the Beau was always prepared with an excuse of such wit that it was quite impossible for the colonel to be severe with so pleasant and amiable a fellow. He was certainly very popular with the officers of his regiment; Lord Petersham, Lord R. Somerset, Mr. Bligh, Mr. Lumley, Lord Charles Kerr, Lord Charles and Lord Robert Manners, and other highly-born youth, were his comrades in the Tenth, and among these generous spirits, with the Prince at their head, the Treasury clerk's son took his place as an equal, and formed friendships which enabled him to aspire to their leadership in matters of fashion a few years later. Brummell had as yet hardly succeeded to his patrimony, but several stories of the period indicate that he was already leading the life of the affluent gentleman. "Hallo, George," said one of his friends who saw him changing horses at a posthouse between London and Brighton, "when did you begin to travel with a chaise and four?" "Only when my valet gave me warning for making him travel with a pair," was the reply.

The Beau, his military deficiencies notwithstanding, got his captaincy in 1796, and there was a general surprise and a good deal of animadversion when, early in the year 1798, he suddenly announced his determination of leaving the regiment. Many reasons were given for the step; his enemies said that the prospect of hard knocks

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

abroad was a sufficient reason for the Beau; more charitable people urged the necessity of wearing hair-powder in the regiment, and the Beau's known objection to that messy fashion as a sufficient excuse for so exquisite a creature. Hair powder, indeed, was one of the burning questions of the day when Mr. Pitt put a tax upon it, and there was a famous occasion at Woburn when the Duke of Bedford, Lord Jersey, Lord Anglesey, and other austere Whigs, all met at a solemn function and had their hair cropped as a protest against the iniquity of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. So why should not Mr. Brummell have conscientious views upon so great a question? Others, again, said that as the Tenth was ordered to Manchester, no one could reasonably expect the peerless Brummell to bury himself in that remote and dismal city. It is probable that Brummell, with his possession of the little fortune in view that very year, had already determined to emancipate himself from all military restraint, light even as that was in the Tenth Hussars, and devote himself exclusively to a life of pleasure. It is quite certain that he asked the Prince's permission before sending in his papers, and that he urged the banishment to Manchester as a reason for his request in a very courtier-like manner. "You know, Sir," he said, "that would separate me from your Royal Highness." In any case, Brummell sold out, came into his

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

£30,000, and entered upon his real career, that of a man of fashion, at a small house in Mayfair, No. 4, Chesterfield Street.

Brummell began this life in a quite modest way, and without those ridiculous extravagances which distinguished his later career. He had a good cook, a superb valet, a couple of hacks for the Park, and a sedan chair for his evening excursions to dinner, the play, or the opera. He gave dinners now and then, with good cookery and choice wines, but his house and establishment were so small, and his visits to other people's festivities so frequent, that his own entertainments were the cause of no ruinous expenditure. At this stage he did not gamble or attend race meetings, and drank very much less than the majority of his contemporaries. The Prince's countenance had given him an unassailable social position, his friends were those who were accustomed to dispense hospitalities rather than receive them, and there is no doubt that had he chosen, Brummell might have lived comfortably within his income without forfeiting any of the social privileges which he enjoyed from the first. As it was, this boy's house in Mayfair became a sort of shrine of male fashion, and before he had been there a year, he was accepted without question as *arbiter elegantiarum* for the whole town.

The ease with which the Beau assumed that position was astonishing in all the circumstances,

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

and seems to justify our regarding him as a social phenomenon. It would have been impossible, of course, without the Prince's patronage, though that in itself was not sufficient. There were other young men about town who shared that great privilege without attaining any great social eminence; it was, indeed, a distinct drag upon some of them who belonged to a well-defined set. Neither is Brummell's acknowledged taste in dress a sufficient explanation of his amazing success as a leader of fashion, though by all accounts this was really elegant; Lord Byron described it as "an exquisite propriety." It was due rather, one is inclined to think, to those two factors, combined with a perfect self-possession and social aplomb, a real good-humour and good nature which at first made the Beau a universal favourite. Brummell's undoubted insolence, his unfeeling rudeness to women, and his indecent attitude towards the Prince all came later, when his head had been turned by flattery, and his judgment and sense of proportion destroyed by success.

That success, intrinsically so petty, but to the small and exclusive world in which he moved so important, is perfectly amazing. One need not accept literally all the amusing stories which have clustered about Brummell's name to be convinced of it; the whole story is set out soberly in the memoirs and diaries of his contemporaries, men like Raikes and Berkeley Craven, who were his

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

intimate friends, and others, like Gronow, who hung about the fringe of his acquaintance and sighed vainly for a position nearer the centre. His receptions in Chesterfield Street recalled the levées of the great nobles of former days, there was many a function, indeed, at Carlton House in that day where the company was less exclusive. Men like Prince Esterhazy, Lord Yarmouth, Lord Cholmondeley, Lord Fife, Lord Wilton and Lord Petersham would wait together in his anteroom until the Beau had done with La Fleur, the friseur, and come radiant from the hands of that artist to receive them. It was an understood part of the ritual to present Watson, the Beau's inestimable servant, with a seven-shilling gold piece upon calling; what that important individual extracted from the tradesmen who thronged to Chesterfield Street is not known, but it must have made up a very comfortable income. So soon as the Beau had attained his prime, there was no person of taste in his circle who would give a tradesman an order without consulting him. Lord Wilton would order plate from Hamlet, the silversmith in St. Martin's Court, or Lady Jersey diamonds, and the articles must be taken to Chesterfield Street and receive Mr. Brummell's approval before they could be accepted by Mr. Hamlet's patrons; a wine cooler for the Duke of York must pass the same ordeal, and Lord Petersham's dressing-case. Lady Hertford would give



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

a grand fête, and her major-domo must consult the great Mr. Brummell as to all details before a finger could be moved in the matter. It is even said that most of the undoubtedly fine pictures with which the Prince enriched the royal collection were only accepted from the dealers after having received the Beau's approbation; though where he acquired a taste in the fine arts at the age of five-and-twenty is difficult to discover, with his record before us. His little house was filled weekly with the offerings of his friends; dressing-cases, easy-chairs, lap-dogs, wine, gloves, snuff, and china, as well as with the humbler oblations of game, fish and venison. All these he would sort over, reserve a very few for his own use, others as presents for friends, and send the rest back to the tradesmen who supplied them, who made a due allowance for them in the Beau's account.

Of Brummell's taste in the important matter of dress there is, as we say, no doubt. It is entirely wrong to think of the Beau as a fop in appearance; though he took infinite pains in the choice of his tailors, the details of his toilette, the material and cut of his clothes, and the method of putting them on. But that care was only apparent in the propriety and neatness of the result, and the mode which he initiated was without any of the extravagances of former dandies, like the Macaronies of the preceding generation, or those

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

exquisites of Plantagenet times whose eccentricities called for sumptuary laws. Brummell's aphorism on the subject of masculine attire, that "a well-dressed gentleman ought to wear nothing which would attract particular attention in the street," is in force to this day, and there is nothing at all extravagant about his formula, "No scent, plenty of linen, and country washing." Brummell, indeed, took the elements of men's dress as he found them, and brought each to perfection in a harmonious combination. Masculine dress had recently undergone a profound transformation as a result of the French Revolution. The picturesque long coat, embroidered waistcoat, knee breeches and small sword, with laced ruffles, wig or powdered hair and three-cornered hat, had been exchanged for pantaloons, cut-away coat, short waistcoat, or breeches and top boots, according to the pursuits of the gentleman who wore them. The Whig gentleman in the House of Commons ostentatiously adopted the rather bucolic dress of the smaller country squire, the blue coat, buff waistcoat, breeches and top boots of the typical John Bull, indeed, as a kind of symbol of their sympathy with popular ideas, and Whigs of the rank of the Duke of Norfolk and of the political eminence of Charles Fox affected a studied negligence in their dress. Brummell took the quieter elements of the same attire, light pantaloons, fancy waistcoat, and well-cut, tight-

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

fitting coat, and, with the help of the eminent tailors, made of their harmonious arrangement a fine art.

His one innovation was the white cravat, and upon this he lavished his genius. He had a theory, which he imparted to his intimates, that a cravat could only be properly tied by a sudden inspiration, and that if that inspiration failed it was necessary to begin over again. Such serious views on this mighty question doubtless explained the appearance of Mr. Watson on the staircase with an armful of white cravats, and his remark to a favoured guest, "Some of our failures." To another inquiring into the mysteries of the cult Brummell whispered the mystic word "Starch." The famous neckwear, it appears, consisted of many feet of fine linen, stiffened to the exact degree which would allow of three parts of its length to be held up without collapsing. Having attained this fine temper, it was ready for Mr. Brummell's throat, and the central rite of the toilette began. As each fold encircled his neck, there was a solemn bending down of the Beau's chin in order that it should take a natural crease, this being repeated until the whole, presented an aspect acceptable to his fastidious taste, when it was secured by a gold brooch, and the ritual was at an end. A few, very few, of his friends were admitted to the privilege of these mysteries; the Prince, of course, came when he chose, which

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

was often. He would honour the Beau by watching him by the hour at his dressing-table, send his carriage away, and, taking pot luck with Brummell at dinner, end up by making a night of it.

It was, then, the Beau's intimacy with that highly placed personage in the first place, and his undoubted elegance in dress, aided by natural good parts, amiability and social qualities which included a keen sense of humour and readiness of reply, that gave him his vogue. Later he supported pretensions to which neither birth nor fortune entitled him by less admirable qualities, unfeeling rudeness, unblushing impudence, arrogant insolence. The Beau, indeed, made no secret of the great part played by his impudence in his success. "It is folly that is the making of me," he once admitted, "if I did not impudently stare duchesses out of countenance, and nod over my shoulder to a prince, I should be forgotten in a week." But nothing in the world could excuse some of the incidents of his later career in London; his atrocious allusion to Mrs. Fitzherbert's position, for example, or the attitude he eventually adopted towards the Prince Regent, who, when all is said, was still Brummell's sovereign, to whom, moreover, he owed a great part of what social eminence he possessed.

Brummell's reign may be divided into two distinct periods—that from 1798, when he left the Tenth Hussars, up to about 1804, during which

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

he shared his social throne with the Prince; and a later period of about twelve years, ending in 1816, during which he reigned alone. There is no reason to believe that Brummell shared the grosser orgies of Carlton House or the Pavilion with the Regent; he was, of course, often with the Prince, and appeared with him almost daily in the Park or St. James's Street, but he visited also many houses whose owners had no part or lot with the set which surrounded the Prince, and for whose ladies such a society was absolutely impossible. Brummell's tastes alone would keep him from any greater share in the carousals of the Lades, Hangers, Macmahons and Morrisses than was necessary to maintain his footing with the Prince; there are stories, indeed, which point directly to that fact, and to his independence and determination to resist any compulsion in such matters. The Prince once filled glasses with neat brandy, and passed one to the Beau. "Excuse me, Sir," said Brummell, "but I don't drink spirits." "Nonsense," was the reply, "we are all going to take some." "Are you, Sir; I'm very sorry to hear it, and I am not." So the Beau sat over his wine unmoved, and watched the rest of the company under the table.

Brummell, indeed, up to a point, undoubtedly exercised a good influence. He was accepted from the first by the most honoured names in English society; the Dukes of Rutland, Bed-

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

ford, Beaufort were his intimate friends; he was on cordial terms of friendship with Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire; Chatsworth, Woburn and Belvoir were among the great country houses which were open to him at all times. At Woburn and Belvoir, indeed, special rooms were kept for this great young man's occupation, and other guests occupying them must turn out when Mr. Brummell announced his intention of paying a visit. The Duke of Argyll, the Earl of Fife, Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, Lord Delamere, Lord Hertford and his son Lord Yarmouth, Mr. Pitt's brother, Lord Chatham, Lord Petersham, the heir of the Stanhopes, and men like General Grosvenor, Sir W. Watkin Wynn, and Mr. Dawson Damer were all among his earlier intimates of whose hospitalities he partook when it pleased him, and whose great social influence he shared.

Brummell was altogether opposed to the cult of the stables and the prize-ring which was affected by a number of well-born young men at this period, men who drove their own vehicles, dressed like their grooms, and sought to emulate the professional coachman by many extraordinary antics. Some of these gentlemen, it is said, had their teeth filed in order the better to expectorate in the manner approved by the drivers of stage coaches. Against this tendency among men of fashion Brummell resolutely set his face. He made great fun of the country gentlemen who assembled in

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

force at Boodle's, whose boots, he said, smelt of bad blacking and the stables, and he undoubtedly checked a movement among men of birth which was quite new in such company, and threatened to assume large proportions. The Beau, as a fact, was no sportsman. He hated exertion of any sort, and never formed one of a shooting party if he could avoid it; he disliked the battue, he said. He hunted in a tepid fashion, it is true, and was on such terms with the Duke of Rutland, that he was allowed to keep a stud of hunters at Belvoir. But he generally confined his hunting to an appearance at the meet, and to riding over a field or two, when he would return to the castle, and write verses in the Duchess's album, or make some of the pretty little water-colour drawings for which he was famous. There are stray records of the Beau at Belvoir scattered about the letters and memoirs of his time; the poet Crabbe met him there, and was favourably impressed with the great man. "I was particularly pleased and amused," he wrote, "with the conversation of the celebrated Beau Brummell." Some tuneful foxhunter, also, left an impression of the Beau's horsemanship as it appeared to the hunting men of the Belvoir country.

"Beau Brummell, God bless us, how ventures he here,  
Delighting our eyes and our noses;  
He splashes through ditches in kerseymere breeches,  
And streaming with attar of roses."

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

Thomas Raikes, who was at Eton with Brummell, and knew him well in later life, and himself a notable dandy and man about town, has in his *Diary* left a not unattractive picture of the Beau during this early part of his career, the period before he was spoiled, and before he developed those faults of taste and feeling at which we have already hinted.

“He was in his time the very glass of fashion, every one from the highest to the lowest conspired to spoil him, but who that knew him could deny that he was still the most gentlemanlike, the most agreeable of companions? Never was a man who during his career had such an undoubted influence, such general popularity in society. He was the idol of the women; happy was she in whose opera box he would pass an hour, at whose table he would dine, and whose assembly he would honour, and why? Not only because he was a host of amusement in himself with his jokes and jeers, but because he was such a favourite with the men that all were anxious to join the party. In those days, too, it was considered necessary that a well-bred man should still have some little tincture of the old school, and this Brummell possessed. He was liberal, friendly, serviceable without any shuffling or tortuous policy or meanness, or manœuvring for underhand objects; himself of no rank or family, but living always with the highest and noblest in the country on terms of intimacy and familiarity, on the contrary, courted, applauded and imitated, protecting rather than protected, and exercising an influence, a fascina-



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

tion in society which no one felt a wish to resist."

This eulogy of Mr. Raikes presents the Beau in an amiable light, and as occupying a very enviable position. It also gives pause to any critic of Brummell who, remembering his later faults and excesses, would be inclined to estimate the man himself as an impudent parvenu, and his influence as the cult of a coat and a neckcloth at the best. It is quite obvious that to have been able to choose his friends from among the great families we have mentioned, and to assume the position among them that he did, the Beau must have been possessed of many good qualities, and have tempered his wit and self-assurance with kindness and moderation. It is certain that the proud society of that day would have accepted no impudent pretender as their leader in all the graces and refinements of life. How came it, then, that a man who had attained in early life a position which a man of whatever rank and fortune might be loth to forfeit, came to be remembered as the prince of fribbles and loungers, and the broken spendthrift, unstable in money matters, who lived for years on the friends whose kindness he abused, to die at last in a French hospital?

The answer to that question, like that other concerning his rise, involves the consideration of more than a single cause. Primarily, of course,

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

the Beau's downfall was owing to a constitutional lack of balance, which rendered him, like many another man of greater parts, incapable of bearing prosperity. Another contributing cause was his reckless extravagance. It is difficult, indeed, even to guess at the mental attitude of men of his class towards such commonplace matters as questions of ways and means; so it is useless to speculate upon his expectation of being able to provide for the life he was leading with his small fortune of £30,000; possibly he never gave the matter a thought, and lived for the day only. Finally, the Beau's doom was sealed and completed by the revival in English society of more worthy ideals. The peace which followed Waterloo gave time for society to pause and estimate the claims of the aspirants for its favour; to weigh, indeed, the worth of the man who had ruled the social roost in London for twenty years, and that of the men who had broken the power of the enemy in a score of hard-fought battles, and by their success in keeping the coast of England inviolate had alone enabled the fribbles to strut and posture in St. James's Street.

Brummell's first downward step was taken when he assumed an improper attitude towards his royal patron the Prince Regent. The terms upon which they had met at first were so intimate that it was almost impossible that they could long continue, especially when one of the pair was a man of such known vanity and instability of character as

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

George Prince of Wales. Brummell, from all we know of him from a hundred anecdotes, which, true or false in detail, undoubtedly present a more or less accurate portrait of the man, was ever reckless in speech when a laugh was to be raised or a point made in conversation, and was possessed, moreover, by a sort of mischievous impishness, which, often harmless in itself, is a dangerous accomplishment to practise in one's relations with princes. The circumstances of the Regent's establishment also afforded many traps for the unwary, especially for a man who made no particular effort to conciliate any one, and whose independence of bearing was apt to run into licence. Here was a Prince with a wife in the unhappy Princess Caroline, a morganatic wife in Mrs. Fitzherbert (a lady, however, who was generally respected and accepted in that relation by society and the royal family itself), and a favourite in Lady Jersey in a position at Carlton House which was perfectly well understood. If ever there was a position in which it behoved an intimate of this much-married prince to move warily, it was that in which affairs at the Prince's court grouped themselves during the opening years of the nineteenth century. It was, unhappily, of little moment how people comported themselves towards the poor Princess of Wales, but to choose between Mrs. Fitzherbert and Lady Jersey was surely a fatal mistake, and this act of folly Brummell committed when he

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

openly took Lady Jersey's side against Mrs. Fitzherbert. The national character of the suggestion of some of his French biographers that he aspired to be the rival of his royal master in the favours of the countess may be dismissed as absurd, but that he openly favoured her pretensions in the royal ménage, in opposition to those of Mrs. Fitzherbert, is certain, as is also the very natural consequence of the last-named lady's resentment.

The first report of a rift in the lute of the relations between the Beau and his master is probably only an echo of that resentment. In company with his friend Colonel Dawson Damer, Brummell called upon Mrs. Fitzherbert, with whom they found the Prince. Whether she had been laying her grievances against Brummell before his Royal Highness is, of course, unknown, but it seems probable from the fact that both the Beau and his friend noticed that the Prince was moody and taciturn, and manifestly displeased at the presence of the two dandies. His attitude, in fact, became unmistakable when Brummell produced his snuffbox, helped himself to a pinch, and laid the box on a small table near his chair. "The place for your box, Mr. Brummell," remarked the Prince, "is not on that table, but in your pocket." Brummell took the remark quietly, but obviously the relations between the great man and the favourite were no longer on their old footing, for the incident to be possible at all. But worse was

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

to follow, and again in connection with the indignant Mrs. Fitzherbert. Mr. Charles Ellis gave a party at Seafort in 1804, at which the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert did him the honour of being present. Brummell was also invited, and drove up to the door unsuspecting of any trouble. He had scarcely entered the house, however, when the Prince came into the hall and, with much kindness of manner, informed the Beau that his presence would be offensive to Mrs. Fitzherbert, and that the pleasure of the party would be destroyed if Brummell sat down to dinner. The Beau bowed, but said nothing, turned on his heel, recalled his chaise, and drove back to town.

Had Brummell been content with a little less display of wounded vanity, and accepted the caprice of an angry woman as part of the day's work, it is probable that, whatever his differences with the Prince, these might have been composed, or the parting at least might have taken place with the blame on the shoulders of his royal patron instead of his own. But that was not the Beau's way. He took up the quarrel with the greatest spirit, and although there was at first no open breach with the Prince, that became inevitable when he included his Royal Highness in the vendetta which he waged against Mrs. Fitzherbert, and joined him with the lady as the object of the raillery with which he now began to entertain the town.

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

This took the very offensive form of overt allusions to the growing tendency of both towards corpulence. The Beau's pleasant manner of alluding to this infirmity was characteristic. There was at Carlton House a gigantic porter, so tall as to be able to look over the gates, and of a prodigious girth of waist, who was well known about the West End of the town as Big Ben. Brummell, besides making facetious remarks about the Prince's figure, began habitually to speak of him as "Ben" to third parties at clubs and elsewhere, and of Mrs. Fitzherbert as "Benina." There are never wanting persons to report pleasantries of this nature to the persons interested, and the Beau's funny remarks were soon known at Carlton House, as perhaps he intended. The Beau, indeed, was remorseless in his warfare against Mrs. Fitzherbert, and the methods he employed were soon the talk of the town, and one would think should have ruined his reputation as a gentleman for ever. Lady Jersey gave a ball at which the Prince, that lady and Brummell were all present. The Beau went out of his way to offer the lady his arm at the end of the evening, and laid particular stress on the word "mistress" in ordering "Mistress Fitzherbert's carriage" in a loud and distinct voice in the hall filled with departing guests. Little wonder that the Prince decided that the time had come to part with a man so lacking in the very decencies of social intercourse. There is reason to believe

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

that his Royal Highness then and there determined to dismiss him, and to choose the occasion and the method of the leave-taking himself.

There are various accounts of the exact circumstances in which the great renunciation took place, some of them not wanting in the kind of humour one associates with Brummell and his set, all of them sufficiently indecent considering the exalted station of one of the parties. That popularly accepted is certainly untrue. One version of this story makes the Beau at Carlton House say to the Prince, "George, ring the bell"; the other makes him reply to a similar request by the Prince, "It is near your Royal Highness." Brummell always denied this story altogether, and protested that no quarrel could have taken place upon such a point, because he and the Prince were on terms so intimate that, in the absence of third parties, there would have been nothing unusual in such a request on his part. His version of the parting was that he had been a successful rival of the Prince in a love affair.

Here, again, it is a matter of the slightest importance to determine the exact cause which stretched the relations between the Prince and his familiar to the breaking-point, and one may conclude the inquiry by recalling a story of the leave-taking which, whether accurate or not, is quite characteristic of both. The Beau was bidden to a party of men only at Carlton House, and the

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

usual hard drinking began after the withdrawal of the servants. Brummell had a place of honour next the Prince. The Prince turned suddenly towards his old favourite, and, without a word, threw a glass of wine into his face. The Beau, immediately recovering his self-possession, lifted his own glass and flung its contents into the face of his neighbour on the other side, with the words, "The Prince's toast; pass it round."

The story is related upon the authority of a gentleman who was often at Carlton House, and would appear to be authentic; but, whatever the exact circumstances of the rupture, it was complete and final. Brummell accepted the situation with the greatest cheerfulness, made no secret of his loss of favour with the Regent, but, on the contrary, professed to glory in it. It seems incredible, but appears to be quite true, that he had the insolence to rally the Prince's own henchman on the subject, and to defy his royal master. "I made him what he is," he is said to have remarked to Colonel Macmahon, "and I can unmake him." Thomas Moore put the rumour into some amusing verse when, in the *Twopenny Postbag*, he made the Regent say to the Duke of York—

"Nor have I resentments, nor wish there may come ill  
To mortal, except, now I think on't, Beau Brummell,  
Who threatened last year, in a superfine passion  
To cut me, and bring the old king into fashion."

Certainly Brummell made no effort to avoid



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

the Prince in public, and London for years was enlivened by a series of rencontres between the pair. In most of these Brummell exhibited an insolence which is perfectly amazing. In the most famous of them he was walking down St. James's Street with Lord Alvanley, when he met the Prince attended by Lord Moira. His Royal Highness stopped to speak to Lord Alvanley without taking the slightest notice of the Beau, and was turning to pass on, when Brummell said, in a perfectly distinct and nonchalant tone, "Alvanley, who's your fat friend?" In a crowd coming out of the opera, Brummell was unwittingly driven almost against the Regent, who, of course, could not give way. To call his attention, some one tapped the Beau on the shoulder. He turned, found the Prince's nose within a foot of his own, stared him full in the face, and coolly turned away without a bow or the slightest change of countenance. But perhaps Brummell's most impudent exhibition towards his former patron took place on the steps of a picture gallery in Pall Mall. The Prince was expected at the exhibition, and sentries had been placed at the doors. Brummell timed his own visit exactly with that of his Royal Highness, walked up the steps immediately in front of him, and acknowledged the salute of the sentries as if for himself.

It was said that, after a time, the Prince was prepared to let by-gones be by-gones; the thing

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

seems improbable, but, as the rumour sprang from a remark of the Regent himself, it must be recorded and accepted in all good faith. There was a prodigious crowd of people at the Argyll Rooms upon the occasion of what was known as the Dandy Ball, an entertainment given by a section of that fraternity to celebrate the good fortune of some of them at the hazard-table. People went early to this festivity because it was known that the Regent would be present, and, in some sense, as a guest of the Beau. Brummell was one of the four stewards in whose names the invitations had been issued, his comrades being Sir H. Mildmay, Mr. Pierrepont and Lord Alvanley. Sir H. Mildmay was also out of favour at Carlton House, and there had been much discussion among the Dandies as to whether or not the Prince should be approached and asked to honour the ball with his presence. Brummell was opposed to that course, but gave way to the wishes of his companions, and Mr. Pierrepont was deputed to sound the royal potentate. The Prince expressed his wish to be present, and, considering the terms upon which he was with two of his hosts, his action may, perhaps, be considered as an overture of peace. In any case, society was vastly interested to witness the meeting. When the Regent appeared and was received by the stewards, he made one of his stately bows to Lord Alvanley and Mr. Pierrepont, and shook each cordially by the hand.

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

But of Brummell and Sir H. Mildmay he took no notice whatever, nor would he even appear to know they were present. Brummell, perhaps naturally, resented this public slight, and when the Regent retired would not attend him to his carriage. This the Prince did not fail to note, and, speaking of the circumstances next day, he said, "Had Brummell taken the cut I gave him good-naturedly, I would have renewed my intimacy with him." This, however, he never did.

There was one more meeting, in circumstances which would be incredible were they not authenticated beyond doubt by a witness of absolute reliability who was present, the well-known soldier General Sir Arthur Upton. It must be confessed that in this long strife of rancour and insult the Prince at last got even with his mutinous favourite, but surely at a grievous cost to his reputation as a man of feeling. Brummell, who had taken to gaming after the quarrel, had met with extraordinary luck, and the town was ringing with the account of his leaving White's a winner of £20,000 at a single sitting. The Duke of York reported the fact to the Prince, who immediately resolved to have his revenge upon the Beau for a score of passages of arms in which the last may be said to have had the best of it. Brummell accordingly was again bidden to Carlton House, and, being very elated at his good fortune, and expecting it to be the occasion of congratulations and recon-

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

ciliation, fell readily into the trap. He was received with all apparent kindness by the Prince, and the dinner promised to pass off prosperously enough. The Beau was delighted at his reception, and, it is said, drank a little more wine than was customary with him, and was hilarious a little beyond his wont. The Prince suddenly turned to his brother, the Duke of York, and remarked, "I think we had better order Mr. Brummell's carriage before he gets drunk," and the poor Beau at last left his master's presence for ever.

Brummell none the less contrived to maintain his position in the world of fashion, and it was not the withdrawal of the Prince of Wales's favour which led directly to his ruin, though, no doubt, that had its share in the disaster. But there were many years of apparent prosperity in store for the Beau, years in which he reigned by himself in lonely splendour. The lighter records of those twelve years which ended at Waterloo are full of the figure of Brummell, of his elegance, his autocratic rule, his insolence. The fashionable clubs, the great functions at the Opera House, those awful and solemn rites at Almack's, for participation in which people of acknowledged position struggled and intrigued, often unsuccessfully, for years, all are pervaded by this personality of the Treasury clerk's son. People at the opera first looked about the house to discover that peerless figure. "How well got up is Brummell to-night!"

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

was the conventional remark proper to the occasion when the paragon was seen in his glory in Fop's Alley. At Almack's duchesses would point him out to their daughters during their first season as the great Mr. Brummell, whose approbation it was important to obtain by care in conversation, if they were so lucky as to have the honour of dancing with him. He abated none of his pretensions after his quarrel with the Prince, and received the same homage as before. The beautiful leaders of the feminine society of that day, whose charm is preserved for us in so many of the canvases of Lawrence, were still devoted to him, and another of those trivial incidents, of which, indeed, the Beau's life and history are composed, is related of his meeting with one of them at this time. He rode up to the carriage of a lady of his acquaintance in the Park in order to present her with a stick of perfume, a concoction of his own, but on condition only that she should give none of it to the Regent, who, he said, was "dying to get hold of it."

In one way Brummell was more fortunate than he deserved. Notwithstanding his rupture with the Prince, the Beau never lost the friendship of the Duke of York, who, indeed, was never known to desert a friend, and he was a favourite, also, with the Duchess, that gentle Princess Royal of Prussia, who was beloved by everybody, of whatever station, who ever had the privilege of meeting



*HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS GEORGE PRINCE OF WALES*

*R<sup>us</sup> Cosway R.A. et Illuminatus Pictor Serenissimæ Walliæ Principis delin. et Excuv.*



## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

her. It was said that the Duchess was grateful to Brummell for the improvement he wrought in the manners of the men's society which she found in England when she came over as a young bride in 1791, the drinking, roystering set of roués with which even royalty was surrounded in those days, who gloried in their excesses, and whose want of courtesy and of refinement in the presence of ladies filled the young Princess with horror.

At Oaklands, accordingly, the Duchess of York held her little court, the only court, indeed, of those barren years, when the poor afflicted King George the Third was a recluse at Windsor, and the irregular proceedings at Carlton House were impossible to any but a particular few. \*Oaklands was described by those who took part in its hospitalities as the last retreat of correct manners and high breeding, where "affability on the one side and respectful attention on the other were equally remarkable." Let it be counted for righteousness to the Beau, of whom so much folly is recorded, that he was an honoured guest in that society, and a favourite of the royal lady who presided over it. He it was who was the central figure of the parties whose chaises assembled at five o'clock at White's on Saturday afternoons, Lord Alvanley, Lord Hertford, Lord Worcester, Lord Foley, Sir H. Cooke, General Upton, and the rest, often in such numbers that post-horses ran short on the road to Oaklands.



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

There was, however, another side to Brummell's deportment at this time of his career; he was civil enough, no doubt, to the company he met at Oaklands, at the fashionable clubs, and elsewhere; but his insolence to people of less consideration was a by-word, and most of the stories in which it is preserved centre upon this period. No doubt the Beau was a privileged jester with his tongue continually in his cheek, and atrocious rudeness was accepted from him which would assuredly have led to personal chastisement in another. It is not necessary to accept all these stories literally; no doubt, as in the case of other exquisites, from Chesterfield onwards, any particularly impudent sally was fathered upon him, just as those of a humorous and kindly nature were attributed to Lord Alvanley. But many of them are authenticated, and, taken together, they undoubtedly present a true picture of his bearing towards all but a few score people of position to whom it was his interest to be civil. It is really a matter of wonder that the Beau went through life with a whole skin. Long before their final rupture, the Regent had been seriously angered by Brummell's behaviour to the Bishop of Winchester, whom he had met at the Pavilion at Brighton. The Beau had helped himself to a pinch of snuff, and had laid his box on the table. The bishop took a pinch unasked, when Brummell called a servant and ordered him to empty the box into the fire.

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

At the table of a country gentleman in Hampshire, in whose house he was dining, he volunteered his opinion of his host's champagne by calling to the servant, "John, bring me some more of that cider." He insulted a better man than himself at Brooks's, Alderman Whitbread, the brewer, where, however, he met his match. The Beau strolled into the club and found a game of hazard going on, and when the box came to his turn he said to Mr. Whitbread, "Hallo, Mashtub, what's the stake?" "Twenty-five pounds," replied that gentleman. "Have at the mayor's pony," said Brummell, "and seven's the main." He won the cast, repeated his success twice, and so won £75. As he pocketed the money, he thanked Mr. Whitbread, and assured him that in future he would drink no one's porter but his. "I wish every other blackguard in London would tell me the same," was the alderman's reply. "Who's that ugly fellow by the fire-place?" he once asked of some one at a great ball given by one of the law lords at his house in Russell Square. "Surely you must know," said the fellow-guest, "it is the master of the house." "How should I know?" replied Brummell; "I was not invited." Some gentleman offered him a lift in his carriage to Lady Jersey's ball. "Thank you exceedingly," said Brummell; "but how are you to go? I could hardly expect you to get up behind with the footman—no, that would not be proper; but, on the other hand, you

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

would hardly expect to sit by me?" Another gentleman asked him to dine with him. "With all my heart, my good fellow; but swear that you won't breathe a word of it to anybody." To a lady at Ascot, who was obviously pleased at his speaking to her, he said, "Nobody sees us, so I'm not risking my reputation."

Such are the stories which tradition tells of Brummell, and which assuredly do not show that amiability and continuing goodness of heart which men like Raikes, who saw only the smooth side of his character, have recorded of him. There are others which are at once more humorous, and pleasanter to read. Some father once complained to him that he had led his son astray. "Indeed, I did all I could for the young fellow," replied the Beau, "I once gave him my arm all the way from White's to Wattier's." An acquaintance asked him for the repayment of a loan of £500. "I paid you," said the Beau. "Paid me! when, pray?" "When I nodded to you from the bow window at White's and said, 'How d'ye do, Jemmy?'" One other story of Brummell as jester must complete the list. A certain Colonel Kelly, who was in command of the troops at the Tower, was famous for the matchless lustre of his blacking. A fire occurred at his quarters, and the poor colonel himself perished in an attempt to rescue his boots from the flames. As soon as the sad news reached the West End, there was a rush

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

among the Dandies to secure the colonel's valet. The Beau was first, and asked terms. "The colonel gave me £150 a year," said the man, "but I should want £200 from you." "Make it guineas," replied the Beau, "and I'll wait on you myself."

Brummell's career was in one way remarkable, there is no record of any entanglement with a woman; and though, as already stated, he was popular among ladies of the highest rank, and at his prime might probably have found a wife of birth and fortune, he never appears to have thought seriously of marriage. There was a story that he once attempted to elope with a young lady in Mayfair, but that the pair were overtaken, and the damsel conducted back to her parents, before they had got through Grosvenor Square, but no one believed it. It was said, too, that near the end of his career, at a moment when he was temporarily in possession of funds by a lucky stroke at the gaming-table, he had thoughts of settling, and made advances to a lady possessed of a large fortune. But his love-making came to nothing, and being questioned by a friend on the subject, he replied, "Impossible, my dear fellow; would you believe it, I discovered that the wretch positively ate cabbage?" Few of Brummell's set married, or, if they did, set any great store on the domestic side of matrimony. The Dandies, as a class, were too selfish to rear and educate

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

children. So Brummell went through life, so far as is known, without a love affair of any kind. People said that he good-naturedly proposed to several young ladies, knowing he would be refused, and merely to give them a certain reputation in having rejected so eminent a lover. He himself was quite candid as to the nature of his affairs of the heart. "My love letters," he would say, "are written on scented paper, and tear-stained with a sponge dipped in rosewater."

Brummell's fall came at last, mainly as the result of his reckless extravagance, and of his losses at play in the effort to find means to support it. There is no evidence that his social influence had suffered any serious decline, though his first youth was, of course, over, and his pretensions had lost the charm of novelty. He had been upon the town for nearly twenty years, and the small world in which he lived was difficult to keep interested in any subject or any person over such a period. A new generation arises in twenty years, and, as a fact, the generation which was coming to its own in 1816 had other ideals than the proper set of a coat-collar or the tying of a cravat. None the less, had the Beau possessed the slightest sense of moderation in his style of living, he might have wagged his head and laid down the law in White's bow window for another quarter of a century, as did a few of his companions upon whom his mantle descended. But his mode of

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

life had exhausted his small patrimony quite early in his career, and his participation in the prevailing vice of the day sealed his doom.

It was well known that Brummell abstained altogether from the gaming tables so long as he was on intimate terms with the Regent. His attendance upon that personage and his many social engagements left little time at his disposal, and he was not often seen at the clubs before the year 1804. He had been elected, however, at White's in 1798, and at Brooks's in the following year, but his disastrous experience at both those clubs and at Wattier's began later. It is notorious that gaming at White's had been the terror of nearly every great family who had a husband or son open to its temptations since the days of Queen Anne. The rage for play at that famous society had moderated a little upon the accession of George the Third; White's was the rallying-place of the court party at that time, and the young King frowned upon the excesses of the hazard table. But those excesses were more than surpassed by the doings of a set of young men at Brooks's, a club established by the malcontents at White's for the very purpose of continuing the orgies which had been interrupted by the new school of virtue established at the older club. The sums which passed across the faro tables at Brooks's during the next twenty years could only be counted literally in millions. There was no

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

secret about it at all; young men like the Thanets, the Foleys and Carlisles of that day, starting life with fine landed estates and large fortunes of ready money, were poor and embarrassed men within that period. Hazard was still played at Brooks's, but the chief game at both clubs at the opening of the nineteenth century was whist for enormous stakes, played by men who devoted their lives to that game, and were patterns of moderation in all else, in order that their minds might be clear for the evening's contest, and who consequently often made large fortunes either by playing themselves, or by heavy betting on the play of the best exponents of the game. Wattier's was a club founded by the Prince's *maitre d'hôtel* of that name, where was played macao, a variation of vingt et un. It was known as the Dandies' Club, of which set of exquisites, with the Beau at their head, it became the favourite resort. There could be no worse school than White's and Brooks's for such a man as Brummell, who was by temperament and training utterly incompetent to maintain an equal contest with the men who played such a game as whist at both clubs.

Raikes records walking home with him in the dawn of a summer morning after a disastrous experience at the game; he confessed that "an unfortunate £10,000" which he had left untouched at his bankers had all gone at the fatal green table, "and his depression was very great,"

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

as well it might be. As they were passing through Berkeley Square, and Brummell "was bitterly lamenting his fortune, he suddenly stopped on seeing something glistening in the kennel, stooped down, and picked up a crooked sixpence. His countenance immediately brightened. 'This,' he said, 'is the harbinger of good luck.' He took it home, and before he went to bed, drilled a hole in it, and fitted it to his watch-chain."

For a time it appeared as though the Beau's superstition were justified, for he had extraordinary luck at the clubs, and if he had exercised the most moderate self-control, might have lived comfortably on the winnings of a couple of years. A story or two of his gaming at the clubs survives. He dropped in at Wattier's, where he found a table full, with Tom Sheridan dealing at macao, and proposed to that gentleman to take his place, and halve the profits or losses of the deal. Upon Sheridan consenting, Brummell added £200 to the £10 which composed poor Sheridan's bank, dealt with great success for ten minutes, and in that short time won £1500. As he handed £750 to his partner, he said, "There, Tom, go home and give your wife and brats a supper, and never play again." On another occasion, after losing a large sum at Wattier's he called with a melodramatic air to a waiter to bring him a candle and a pistol. A man sitting next to him immediately produced the pistol and offered it to him,



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

when he and the rest of the company realized that they had been playing with a desperate madman.

For his own sake, it was a pity Brummell could not take his own advice to Sheridan, for he had an extraordinary run of good fortune. He sat down one evening at White's and at a single sitting won £20,000 at whist from his friend George Harley Drummond, a member of the great banking house. It was the first time Mr. Drummond had played for high stakes, and the loss led to his withdrawal from the firm. At a later period Brummell was known to be £36,000 to the good, and his friends all implored him to buy an annuity and so place himself beyond the reach of poverty. He would not listen to them, and in a few weeks was without a penny. His friends tried to keep him within bounds by a method well known among gamblers as the "tie up." Mr. Pemberton Mills gave him £10 at White's on condition of receiving £1000 from Brummell if the latter were found at the gaming table within a month; that is, Brummell bet him 100 to 1 that he would not play within that period. A week later Mills again came to the club, and found him still playing after four nights of continuous loss. "Well, Brummell," he said, "you may at least give me back the £10 you had the other night." The Beau, in fact, was no match for the expert players he met at White's, and his ruin was certain. He attributed all his misfortunes to the loss of his lucky

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

sixpence, which he said he gave away by mistake to a hackney coachman, and now supposed "that rascal Rothschild had got hold of it." He was, indeed, so convinced of the value of that treasure, that he went to the length of advertising for it. More than a score of people called in answer, each with a sixpence with a hole in it, but the Beau was unable to recognize his talisman among them.

Brummell, at the end of these reverses, was almost in a state of indigence, though for a time he managed to conceal the fact from general knowledge. His establishment in Chesterfield Street had been exchanged for a smaller one in Chapel Street; there were no more little dinners, and when the Beau lacked invitations, he dined alone at Brooks's. But he still appeared as usual in his old splendour, and, like others in his situation, he contrived to live upon such credit as remained to him, and by the fearsome aid of the money lenders. Of these, a firm of that time, Howard and Gibbs, were the ravens who fed him during those last lean years. Later came gifts and loans from a host of generous friends; later still sums raised upon accommodation bills bearing the joint signatures of himself and certain of his acquaintance. It is the old weary story of the spendthrift in distress, money raised at ruinous interest upon personal security, and a final dispute between the recipients of the meagre spoil result-

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

ing from such transactions as to the responsibility, when the inexorable presentation became due.

Among these acquaintances of the Beau was a gentleman whose name has survived only in an initial, a Mr. M——, who was entirely dissatisfied with Brummell's behaviour in the transactions they had undertaken together, took umbrage, and resolved, as was said at the time, to have his pound of flesh. This meant nothing more nor less than the incarceration of the Beau's sacred person in a debtor's gaol, for there was no other asset to seize, except a small collection of furniture at Chapel Street. Mr. M——, however, in his dudgeon was resolved upon that impious course, and Brummell was aware of his determination; possibly one or two others, though certainly not many. Among these, however, was perhaps Scrope Davies, that strange figure of the Regency, gambler, scholar, poet, man of fashion. It was Scrope Davies who discovered Byron with his locks in curl-papers, and was sworn to secrecy; which is, perhaps, a reason for our possession of that interesting scrap of knowledge; it was Scrope, too, who cut his throat so regularly and so ineffectually after each Newmarket meeting that the surgeon refused to hurry when he heard it "was only Mr. Davies." On the very last day of the Beau's sojourn in London, when he was obviously looking out for travelling expenses, he wrote to Davies a famous letter. "My dear Scrope,—Lend me

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

£500 for a few days: the funds are shut for the dividends, or I would not have made the request.—G. Brummell.” The letter was delivered to Davies as he was driving with Byron in Charles Street, and the reply is even more famous. “My dear Brummell,—All my money is locked up in the funds.—Scrope Davies.”

Mr. M——’s writ, in fact, was out; Brummell knew it, and had at last resolved to quit the scene of his long triumph and seek the shelter of a foreign shore in order to escape the clutches of the outraged M——, who thenceforward became known as the Dandy Killer. The extreme urgency of Brummell’s affairs, however, was still unknown, and Raikes, who had so often shared his confidence, was surprised when he heard of his intended flight on its very eve. “I never was more astonished in my life,” wrote that gentleman, “than when in 1816 he confided to me that his situation had become so desperate that he must fly the country that night and by stealth.” The Beau appeared that evening at the opera as usual, but left early, and did not return home. He drove in a chaise lent by a friend to his own, which was waiting for him a few miles on the Dover Road with four post-horses, chartered a small vessel at that port; thoughtfully placed his carriage on board, and was at Calais soon after daybreak. On the morning of the 17th of May 1816, accordingly, London woke to find itself

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

bereft of its paragon. If there had been any possible consolation in his presence, which was hardly the case in his shorn condition, London might have had reason to deplore his loss, for his acquaintance and his tradesmen were £60,000 to the bad. Many of the sufferers were among his personal friends whose bounty had kept him going during the past two years; the newspapers were full of lists of these gentlemen, with their names hardly veiled by blanks and asterisks. There was, of course, an official raid on his house in Chapel Street, and "the furniture, wine, books, plate and general effects of a gentleman of fashion lately gone abroad" were sold on the spot for £11,000. Among these was a choice snuffbox containing a slip of paper bearing the Beau's handwriting to the following effect: "This was intended for the Prince Regent if he had behaved with more propriety towards me."

It was pointed out by a writer somewhat lacking in the senses of proportion and humour, that Napoleon Bonaparte and Beau Brummell both ended their careers at much the same time; it is certain that in the case of both those great men a period of glory was followed by one of decline which their biographers would fain leave out of their records. Bonaparte might surely have found a happier end than he did had a round shot struck him on the field of Waterloo, and had the Fates snatched Brummell from the scenes of his success

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

a few years before he outran the constable, his memory might have preserved some show of interest, if only as that of a social curiosity. But he displayed no particular qualities of steadfastness or manliness during his prosperity, and he was now to bear the supreme test of adversity still worse. Brummell, in fact, ran over to France, and for the space of twenty-four years set himself deliberately to live upon the charity of his friends. This charity was copious enough to have maintained him in comfort, and even luxury, had he had the common decency to adopt his style of living to his altered circumstances. The greater number of his acquaintance in London, including many whose goodness he had already abused, came forward with the greatest liberality. He received the anonymous gift of £1000 almost at the moment of his arrival at Calais; a Mr. Chamberlayne made him a yearly allowance, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Alvanley, Lord Sefton, Lord Worcester, and many others were unwearying in their benefactions. The Duchess of York periodically sent to him little purses worked by her own hand, which were always well filled. With the final peace which followed Waterloo, Calais was crowded with English gentry travelling on the continent, the best known of whom made a point of calling on the Beau, to spare whose purse many of them ordered the dinner from Dessein's and paid for it; others left substantial proofs of their

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

kindness behind them. As Lord Stuart de Rothesay, the English Ambassador, said, Brummell was the most happily situated man in Europe, living as he did on the road from London to Paris, with the news from both capitals brought daily to his door. There was a procession, indeed, of the best of English society to his modest suite of three rooms at honest Leleux's, the printer, who lived at the old Hôtel d'Angoulême, and found a roof for the Beau for just sixteen years. Here, with no hospitality to dispense, he might have lived in comfort on a tithe of the levy he made on his old friends had he been endowed with a spark of right feeling or self-respect.

Brummell's return for all that warm-hearted kindness revealed no trace of those qualities. His first step on settling at Leleux's was to spend £1000 on furniture for his three rooms. Nothing but boules and suites of the style Louis Quatorze, with ornaments of old Sèvres, would satisfy the taste of this prince of mendicants. If he became tired of any of these expensive toys, he would sell them for a quarter of their value, and during ten years he kept a courier running at frequent intervals between Calais and Paris on commissions for such transactions, who owed to saving twelve hundred pounds in the business. In the midst of these elegant appointments he lived the ceremonious life of the indolent exquisite; drank his café au lait at nine precisely; read till twelve

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

at which hour he was seen to cross the passage leading to his bedroom in a flowing dressing-gown of surpassing richness for his two hours' toilette; so punctual was he, indeed, that M. Leleux's printers would say, "Ah, voila M. Brummell, c'est midi," and would lay aside their craft for the midday meal. Then would follow the Beau's ridiculous levée of two hours; his promenade of one, his dinner at five brought over from Dessein's hotel; and at seven-thirty, the play, where he kept a box.

This, of course, was all mighty well for a man of fortune, but for a broken spendthrift living on charity it was not only indecent, but was attended by circumstances which made it dishonest. Raikes, who was exceedingly tolerant of the Beau's shortcomings, makes that quite clear. Brummell deliberately misrepresented the amount of the resources with which his friends provided him, and wrote frequent pitiful letters to England suggesting he was in want at the very time that he was rioting in the extravagance we have described. "His applications to his friends were unceasing," says Raikes, "and though for a long time liberally answered, at last they were wearied by the repetition, particularly when no signs of indigence could be observed in his mode of life. His kind friends were constantly ready to assist him, but when at last he had recourse to statements of distress and imprisonment which the next post



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

proved to be unfounded, their patience began to be exhausted."

Meanwhile the Beau abated none of his old social pretensions, strutted about the town, gave himself all the airs of his prosperity, and displayed all his old insolence. He dined once with Mr. Marshall, the British Consul, whose office he himself coveted, and, taking a cutlet on his fork, threw it to a pet dog in the room, with the remark, "Here, see if you can get your teeth through it, for I'm damned if I can." He spoke of a military man, a French resident who had been wounded in the face, as "a hatter." This gentleman called for an explanation. "I'm sorry any one could conceive it possible that I could be guilty of such a breach of good manners," said Brummell. "There is not a word of truth in it." The Frenchman, quite satisfied, rose to go. "For," added Brummell, "now I think of it, I never in my life dealt with a hatter without a nose."

The death of the Duchess of York in 1820 was a great blow to Brummell; the continued favour of that royal lady, implying, as it does, some merit which it is difficult to discover elsewhere, is one of the few things to be recorded to his credit; and the final severance of their friendship brought an added trouble in the cessation of the benefits he had long been accustomed to receive. The accession of his former patron to the throne in the same year seems to have raised few hopes in the

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

Beau's breast : "An indulgent amnesty of former peccadilloes," he wrote to Raikes, "should be the primary grace influencing newly throned sovereignty. From my experience, however, of the personage in question, I must doubt any favourable relaxation of those stubborn prejudices which have during so many years operated to the total exclusion of one of his élèves from the royal notice, whom I need not particularize." Brummell, therefore, was probably not disappointed at the barren effect upon his affairs of the visit which King George made to Calais when he passed through the town on his way to Hanover in 1821. Some slight tentative advances he made seem to suggest that there was a lingering hope in his mind, but he should have known that a complete submission was the only means of obtaining a restoration of the royal favour. It was of little purpose to put down his name at Dessein's, where his Majesty was lodged, when he failed to make one of the loyal party of English residents who welcomed their monarch on his landing at the pier. Brummell, indeed, carefully took a walk in the opposite direction at the moment of that auspicious event, and it was only by accident that he caught sight of his former patron. The Beau was returning to Leleux's on his return from the walk, when he found himself hindered by the crowd which lined the street, and could only cross over to gain his rooms just as the royal

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

carriage was approaching. The spectacle of the well-dressed Englishman making his way in front of the approaching procession attracted the notice of all. "Good God, there's Brummell!" exclaimed the King to one of his suite, as the Beau, pale as death, brushed past Leleux at his door without a word, and disappeared into his room.

There seemed some little pathos in Brummell's sending old Maraschino to the hotel in order that his Majesty's punch should not lack a necessary ingredient. So, too, when that potentate asked for snuff after his dinner, and M. le Maire found himself wanting in that luxury, it was to Brummell that a messenger was sent off hot-foot, and the contents of the Beau's box which regaled the royal nose. "Ah," said his Majesty, after a pinch, "I know only one man who can mix snuff like that." On the morrow some of the suite called on Brummell, and advised him to seek an interview with the outraged Majesty; it is possible that they knew the royal mind at the moment, and that with the Beau's submission there were hopes of a return of favour. But it was all in vain; the Beau would not humble himself; the King rolled on to Hanover without the refreshing bounty which might have followed the Beau's unbending, and of which that unfortunate stood so sorely in need, and the last word was said in the matter when his Majesty remarked, upon quitting the town, "I leave Calais, and have not seen Brummell."

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

There had long been a movement among the best and most discriminating of Brummell's friends to get for him some official post abroad, such as a consulship in one of the more important towns. Leghorn was mentioned, and it is probable that he might have obtained that at Calais, only that Mr. Marshall, its holder, as was said, "persisted in living." But the failure of Brummell to come to a reconciliation with the King was regarded by those friends as a sign that it would be useless to push his interest during his Majesty's lifetime; Mr. Canning, indeed, refused to recommend him even upon the solicitation of the Duke of York. None the less, a move was made upon the Duke of Wellington's ministry coming into office in 1828, and Brummell was appointed as Consul of Lower Brittany, with head-quarters at Caen, at a salary of £400 a year.

There was now a difficulty in his leaving Calais, where he was in pawn, so to speak. His debts at this time were never accurately stated, but they may perhaps be estimated by the fact that he owed his valet £250. He had a large overdraft at his banker's, M. Leveux, who advanced another £500 to enable him to quit the town. But to meet his responsibility to that gentleman, the Beau was forced to mortgage £320 a year of his future salary of £400. His general attitude towards his liabilities is perhaps indicated by his last act on leaving Calais; he took the occasion to order a

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

new snuffbox at Dabert's, a mere trifle, however, costing only £100.

It is a dreary and unprofitable task to watch the Beau through the last phase of his career, that miserable, useless life at Caen, in which, however, his true character, perhaps, best appears. At the outset he committed an act of incredible folly by writing to Lord Palmerston an official memorandum to the effect that his office was a sinecure, and should be abolished, or reduced to a scale capable of management by a vice-consul. The Foreign Minister, at a period of popular agitation for retrenchment, was obliged to act upon this report, accepted Brummell's resignation, and established a local grocer, an Englishman named Armstrong, as vice-consul at a small salary. No one has ever fathomed the Beau's motives in this astonishing proceeding. Some thought he hoped to force the government to find him a better post elsewhere; others that he was moved by pique against the mortgagees of his salary. It was in all the circumstances an act of deliberate dishonesty, and Brummell's delicacy in accepting a few hundred pounds of public money for an easy post when he had been living on charity for years deceived no one.

Meanwhile he set up as a leader of fashion at Caen with all his old insolence; would have nothing to do with the prefects and local officials of the new régime of Louis Philippe, whom he

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

was accustomed to speak of as "the Duke of Orleans," and confined his patronage to the old Legitimist families of the neighbourhood, who, to be sure, were exceedingly kind to him, and were often repaid by his customary rudeness. One of these gentlemen gave a dinner in his honour, a feast of turtle, ortolans, Rouen salmon, and the like. Some one next morning asked Brummell how it had gone off. "Don't ask me, my good fellow," he replied, "but, poor man, he did his best." An English lady, seeing him pass, invited him from her balcony to "take tea." "Madam," he replied, "you take medicine, take a walk, take a liberty, but you drink tea." But his career was coming to an end, financially, socially and physically. His jaunty attitude towards his responsibilities was no longer tolerated by his creditors, and Mr. Armstrong, the vice-consul, an energetic, capable man, the good genius of all the English residing in that part of France, who had been installed as his man of business, could keep them no longer at bay. He was arrested for debt, and for a time, at least, was forced to rub shoulders with a set of unwashed debtors in a common room of the prison, at which his gorge rose. His imprisonment was the signal for renewed begging in England, and renewed benefactions from his friends. The indefatigable Armstrong obtained the relaxation of the prison discipline in Brummell's favour, and he even got

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

two quarts of milk daily for his bath, and displayed his silver shaving set in that place of durance. He grumbled at the dinners supplied by Armstrong, "and the prison cats grew fat on the cutlets he threw to them, oblivious of the hungry mouths of the prisoners around him." At the suggestion of Lord Alvanley, Armstrong started on a begging expedition to England, and personally canvassed his friends. Meanwhile Lord Granville, at Paris, materially softened Brummell's lot in prison by his generosity. The good Armstrong again found generous help with the Beau's friends, those same good Samaritans who had assisted him so regularly during the previous twenty years. Lastly Lord Palmerston found means of applying some £200 from a public fund to Brummell's needs, and the list was graced by a donation of £100 from King William the Fourth. By funds thus provided, Armstrong was able to make some compromise with the creditors, and Brummell was released. He appeared the same evening at a soirée given by one of the leaders of the old French society with all his old engaging swagger. Upon receiving the congratulations of the company, he replied : " Je puis vous assurer que c'est aujourd'hui le plus heureux jour de ma vie, car je suis sorti de prison, et j'ai mangé de saumon."

Captain Jesse, who afterwards became his biographer, made a pilgrimage to Caen at this time

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

and met his hero. He found him quite unchanged by adversity; his bow varied from an inclination of forty-five degrees upward, according to the consideration he thought due to the person he was good enough to notice; his black pants, buff waistcoat, and blue coat were as unexceptionable as ever, his boots were blacked over the soles, his spittoon was of silver; "one cannot spit into clay," he explained to Jesse. His consumption of fine linen was on the old scale, he still aimed, at least, at three shirts and three white neckcloths a day: "An elegant," he said, "requires per week 20 shirts, 24 pocket handkerchiefs, 9 or 10 pairs of summer trousers, 30 neck handkerchiefs, a dozen waistcoats, and stockings à discretion." No wonder the Beau's laundress remained unpaid. He strutted about gibing and sneering at every one, a sort of walking lampoon. At the same time he would drink champagne with any stranger he met at the table d'hôte of the Hôtel d'Angleterre (he was at last deposed from a separate establishment in rooms of his own), and would contend with the other guests for the best portions of the chicken fricassée. At this table he would hector and lay down the law and fire off his insolent sallies on his betters. He was asked once if he had been as intimate with King William the Fourth when Duke of Clarence as with the others of the Royal Family. "The man did very well," he replied, "to walk about the quarter-deck crying 'luff,' but



## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

he was so rough and uncivilized that I was obliged to cut him." This of his sovereign, who had but lately subscribed £100 to get the Beau out of prison. What could man or angel do for such a creature as this?

Certainly poor Armstrong did all that was possible, went a second time to England to confer with Lord Alvanley as to getting some fixed income for Brummell, however small. It was proposed to put up subscription lists at White's and Brooks's to raise a fund for the broken impostor. The idea was rejected as too humiliating, though it does not appear that Brummell himself made any objection. But many of his friends were now dead, others were weary of twenty years of importunity, accompanied, as it was, by such dishonest extravagance; others still had forgotten him after he had left Calais for the seclusion of Caen. "Hallo, Brummell," said one of these, who happened to stray to the old town and encountered the Beau in the street, "we all heard you were dead." "Mere stock-jobbing, my dear fellow, mere stock-jobbing," he replied, with something of his old humour. But by incredible exertions Armstrong at length got together a certain annuity of £120 a year from England, and this he himself dispensed, setting aside £60 for board and lodging, and £60 for wine and clothing. Here again it was hopeless to bring the Beau to reason. Armstrong insisted on a maximum of one

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

shirt a day and a black cravat instead of a white one, and was obdurate in the matter of brocaded dressing-gowns, even though the Beau indignantly flung one of cotton out of the window. But in other matters it was impossible to control him. He must still have his *biscuits de Rheims* and his Maraschino, his primrose gloves, oiled wigs, *eau de Cologne* and *vernis de Guiton* blacking at five francs a bottle, and for these necessities he incurred debts all over the province. Worst of all, to Armstrong's great wrath, he began speculating in lottery tickets.

It was, perhaps, a merciful dispensation to all concerned when repeated attacks of paralysis at length left Brummell with an impaired reason; even then there were still friendly houses open to him in Caen, so tolerant is human charity; the kindly French gentlefolk would allow the old man to creep to their firesides and fall asleep, to be wakened only when a meal was ready. But those last years were attended by incidents of which it is painful even to think. In his sitting-room at the hotel the stricken Beau would hold ghostly receptions of the friends of his prime, would rise to receive his phantom guests with the courtly bow of his prosperity, chatter with each until he heard the next announced, or until the "carriages were called at ten." Could anything surpass this horror, or Nemesis bring a more fitting retribution to a life of folly? It is said that an English lady

## IN THE DAYS OF THE GEORGES

who had known him happened to be in Caen and saw the old man crossing the passage at the hotel on his way to one of these mournful ceremonies. At the sight of the afflicted Brummell, whom she had last seen as the elegant autocrat at Almack's, she burst into tears, and hurriedly left the town and the horror of his fall behind her.

From this misery Brummell was at last rescued by death; the wants of his last two years tended by the pious women of the Hôpital du Bon Sauveur, where he died on the 30th of March 1840. His grave is still marked by a plain headstone in the cemetery at Caen.

So ended George Bryan Brummell, and charity itself could hardly deny that it was a fitting close to such a life of folly. He and the small band who shared his inspiration represented no ideal except the establishment of a narrow social tyranny; they stood aside in their petty seclusion blind and deaf to all the great influences which were moulding the modern world as we know it, and lived through a crisis in the national life without leaving a trace of their influence upon their times. One may search the annals of those days in vain to find a man of real eminence among them, and it is surely well that time should have exposed their pretensions, and estimated their exact importance. Brummell and the cult he founded, indeed, have evaporated into a mere name. There is not even an adequate portrait

## THE INCOMPARABLE BRUMMELL

to show us the bodily presence of the paragon who so fascinated London a hundred years ago, and his only memorial, apart from the record of his follies, is that plain headstone in Caen cemetery which some kind hand still keeps piously in repair.



# INDEX

- ABERCORN, Earl of**, 125  
**Addison**, 17, 87, 88  
**Almack's**, 143, 159, 233 *et seq.*, 287, 288, 316  
**Alvanley, Lord**, 284, 285, 290, 308, 312  
**Amelia, Princess**, daughter of George II, 38, 47, 48  
**Ancaster, Duke of**, 178, 206  
**Anglesey, Lord**, 264  
**Anne, Queen**, 29, 30, 31, 33, 295  
**Argyll, Duke of**, 273, 303  
**Aston, Sir Willoughby**, 242  
*Athenaeum*, 132-133  
**Augusta of Saxe Gotha**, wife of Frederick Prince of Wales, 61, 156, 165, 169, 176, 195  
*Authentic Record of the Court of England*, 124, 127, 131  
**Ayscough, Dean**, 92  
  
**BARRINGTON, Lord**, 206  
**Bathurst, Lord Chancellor**, 209  
**Beaufort, Duke of**, 273  
**Beckford, William**, 127, 132  
**Bedford, Duke of**, 264, 272  
**Bellenden, Mary**, 34  
**Bessborough, Lord**, 248  
**Bolingbroke**, 78  
**Boscawen, Lucy**, 170  
**Bristol, Lady**, 49  
 —, Lord, 48, 184, 187, 212  
**Brooks's**, 143, 230-247, 291; foundation of the club, 295, 299, 314  
**Brummell, George Bryan ("Beau")** — origin, 253-258; education, 258-260; intimacy with the Prince Regent, 261-277; his taste in dress, 268-271; his influence on society, 272-277; rupture with the Prince Regent, 277-294; at the gaming-tables, 295-302; his fall and exile in Calais, 302-307; final contact with George IV, 307-308; last days and death, 309-317  
 —, William, father of "Beau," 256-258  
**Brunswicks**, family strife of, 19, 26  
**Buccleuch, Duke of**, 234  
**Bunbury, Sir Thomas Charles**, 151, 159, 234, 247  
**Burford, Lord**, 248  
**Burgoyne, General**, 234  
**Burnett, Bishop**, 17  
**Busche, Mme. von**, 23  
**Bute, Lord**, 78, 92, 93, 150, 156, 169  
**Byron, Lord**, 254, 266, 300  
  
**CANNING**, 309  
**Carlisle, Lord**, 234, 238, 239, 241, 296  
**Caroline of Ansbach, Queen of George II**, 15-18, 27, 28-47, 50-77  
 —, Princess, daughter of George II, 62, 70, 73  
 —, Queen of George IV, 114-118, 124, 253, 279  
 —, daughter of George IV, 26  
**Cartaret**, 71, 78, 147  
**Charles Edward Stuart**, 79  
 —, VI of Austria, 16, 28  
**Charlotte of Mecklenburg Strelitz, Queen of George III**, 101, 115, 125, 126, 137, 156-158, 162, 198, 210  
**Chatham, Earl of** — See Pitt, William  
**Chesterfield, Lord**, 53, 78, 290  
**Cholmondeley, Lord**, 234, 267  
**Chudleigh, Elizabeth** (Duchess of Kingston), 102; the story of her astonishing career, 165-225  
*Citizen*, 95, 96, 98, 114  
**Clarges, Sir Thomas**, 234  
**Clement XIV, Pope**, 201, 216  
**Claymont, Lord**, 234, 248  
**Clinton, Lady Lucy**, 146  
**Combe, William**, 95, 98  
**Crabbe**, 274  
**Craven, Berkeley**, 259, 266  
**Croker, John Wilson**, 51  
**Cromartie, Lord**, 79  
**"Cumberland, Princess of" (Mrs. Serres)**, 118 *et seq.*  
 —, Henry Frederick, Duke of, 121, 122, 130  
 —, William, Duke of, 45, 50-51, 54, 61, 77, 79  
**Cunningham, Alan**, 100  
  
**DAMER, Colonel Dawson**, 273  
**Darlington, Countess of** (Countess Kilmansiege), 28, 33, 40  
**Davies, Scrope**, 300-302  
**Delamere, Lord**, 273  
**De la Warr, Lord**, 63-64, 137  
**Derby, Lord**, 234, 248  
**Dettingen**, 15, 79, 143  
**Devonshire, Duchess of**, 211, 273  
 —, Duke of, 146, 248  
**Dodsley**, 79  
**Dorset, Duke of**, 147  
**Drogheda, Lord**, 248  
**Duncannon, Lord**, 248

# INDEX.

EGREMONT, Lord, 231-232, 239, 249  
 Ernest Augustus, first Elector of Hanover  
 (father of George I), 19, 20, 27  
 Errol, Lord, 151  
 Essex, Lord, 73  
 Esterhazy, Prince, 267  
 FIFE, Lord, 267, 273  
 Fifteen, The, 33  
 Fitzherbert, Mrs., 95, 115; Beau Brummell and, 271, 278-283  
 Fitzpatrick, Richard, 234, 236, 241, 242  
 Foley, Lord, 238, 248, 267, 296  
 Foote, Samuel, 207-208  
 Forty-five, The, 78  
 Fox, Charles James, 142, 144, 150, 151;  
 the story of his gaming, 229-249, 257,  
 258; the negligence of his dress, 269  
 —, Henry, 69, 142, 144, 145-159  
 —, Sir Stephen, 69, 144, 234, 238  
 Franklin, Benjamin, 217  
 Frederick the Great of Prussia, 38, 47, 84,  
 190, 218, 221, 224  
 —, Wilhelm of Prussia, brother-in-law of  
 George II, 14, 38, 45-48, 52  
 —, Louis, Prince of Wales, birth and  
 childhood, 13-19, 29-37; his place in the  
 Double Marriage project, 37-43; comes  
 to England and is created Prince of  
 Wales, 48-52; feud with his father,  
 George II, 52-82; marriage, 63-65;  
 death and character, 82-83, 168, 169,  
 176, 195  
 GAINSBOROUGH, 137, 143  
 George I, 13, 19-25, 27, 49  
 —, II, 11; character, etc., 13-26; marriage  
 with Caroline of Ansbach, 15-18, 28-29;  
 strife with George I, 31-36; attitude  
 towards the Double Marriage with  
 Prussia, 40-48; feud with his son,  
 Frederick Prince of Wales, 48-82; his  
 opinion of George III, 93; relations with  
 Lady Sarah Lennox, 141, 148-149;  
 relations with Elizabeth Chudleigh,  
 180-182  
 —, III, 82; youth, 89-95; legendary  
 intrigue with Hannah Lightfoot, the  
 "Elusive Quakeress," 89-137; romantic  
 attachment to Lady Sarah Lennox,  
 149-162; cordiality towards Elizabeth  
 Chudleigh, 183, 188, 198, 295  
 —, IV, 26, 94, 128; the story of his re-  
 lations with Beau Brummell, 253-302  
 Gibbon, Edmund, 237  
 Gordon, Lord George, 257  
 Grafton, Duke of, 73, 146  
 Granby, Lord, 215  
 Grosvenor, General, 273  
 Gunning, Elizabeth, Duchess of Hamilton,  
 150, 157, 178  
 HAMILTON, Duke of, 170, 176, 178  
 —, Lady Anne, 124  
 —, Lady Archibald, 83  
 —, Lady Elizabeth, 170  
 Handel, 59  
 Harcourt, Lord, 125, 156  
 Hardwicke, Lord Chancellor, 50

Hayter, Dr., Bishop of Norwich, 92  
 Hertford, Lady, 267  
 —, Lord, 208, 273  
 Hervey, Augustus John, husband of  
 Elizabeth Chudleigh, 171 *et seq.*  
 —, Lord, 12, 48-50, 54-78, 83, 142, 169,  
 171  
 Hoadley, Bishop, 62  
 Holland, Lord, 230-232, 237, 238, 247  
 Hotham, Sir Charles, 43-44  
 Howard, Mrs., 34  
 Howe, Lord, 170  
 Hume, Joseph, 123  
 ILCHESTER, Lord, 144, 157  
 JACOBITES, 12, 33, 69, 158  
 James I, 28, 29  
 Jersey, Lady, her relations with the Prince  
 Regent, 267, 278-281, 291  
 —, Lord, 264  
 Jesse, Captain, biographer of Beau Brum-  
 mell, 312-313  
 —, John Heneage, 132-137  
 Johnson, Dr., 98, 207  
 JUNIUS, 121, 127  
 KENDAL, Duchess of (Melusina Schulem-  
 berg), 23, 28, 40, 53  
 Kent, Duke of, 129  
 Kerr, Lord Chas., 263  
 Kielmansegg, Countess. *See* Darlington  
 Countess of  
 Kildare, Lady, 148  
 Kingston, Duke of, 186 *et seq.*  
 Konigsmark, Count Philip, 21-25, 27  
 LAUZUN, Duc de, 248  
 Lawson, Miss, maid of honour to Augusta,  
 Princess of Wales, 170  
 Lennox, Lady Caroline, 145, 147-155  
 —, Lady Sarah, her romance with  
 George III, 141-161; first and second  
 marriages, 159-162  
 Lepel, Mary, Lady Harvey, 55  
 Lightfoot, Hannah, legendary intrigue of  
 George III with, 89, *et seq.*  
 Liverpool, Earl of, 256  
 Louis of France, 215  
 —, Philippe, 310  
 MACDONALD, Flora, 79  
 Manners, Lord Charles, 263  
 —, Lord Robert, 263  
 March, Lord, 234  
 Marlborough, 14  
 —, Duchess of, 58  
 Middlesex, Lady, 83  
 Mildmay, Sir H., 285-286  
 Monson, Lord, 248, 255  
 Montagu, Mrs., 181  
 —, Lady Mary Wortley, 48, 172  
 Monthly Magazine, 100, 102, 104, 106, 108,  
 112, 114, 117, 124, 126, 132  
 More, Hannah, 210-211  
 Mountstuart, Lord, 206  
 Murray, Lord Mansfield, 142, 206, 214  
 NAPIER, Hon. Geo., 159

# INDEX

- Napoleon Bonaparte, 254, 302  
*New Monthly Magazine*, 127  
 Newcastle, Lord, 151, 153, 154-155  
 Newcastle, Duke of, 35, 36, 53, 147, 206, 213, 236  
 Noel, Sir Gerald, 123, 128  
 Norfolk, Duchess of, 79  
 —, Duke of, 269  
 North, Lord, 84, 92  
*Notes and Queries*, 132  
  
 ORLEANS, Duke of, 248  
 Osnaburgh, Bishop of, 35, 52, 53  
 Ossory, Lord Upper, 234  
 Oudenarde, 15  
  
 PALMERSTON, Lord, 310, 312  
 Peel, Sir Robert, 123  
 Pelham, 142, 145  
 Petersham, Lord, 263, 267, 273  
 Pigott, Admiral, 234, 248  
 Piozzi, Mrs. (Mrs. Thrale), 98, 99, 100  
 Pitt, William, Earl of Chatham, 61, 65, 71, 123, 126, 127, 129, 130, 133, 142, 172  
 —, William, 142, 177, 273  
 Platen, Countess, 20-25, 28  
 Portland, Duke of, 206  
 "Putting Place of Princes," 35, 76  
 Pulteney, William, 71, 78, 142, 168-169, 206  
  
 RANDVILL, Prince, 222-224  
 Raikes, Thomas, 266, 275, 276, 293, 301  
 Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 99, 137, 138, 143, 150, 165-167  
 Rich, the actor, 81  
 Richmond, Duke of, 243  
 Rockingham, Lord, 245  
 Rodney, Admiral, 234, 236  
 Romney, 243  
 Rowlandson, Thomas, 95  
*Royal Register*, 96  
 Rumbold, Thomas, 99  
 Rutland, Duke of, 272, 274  
  
 SALISBURY, Marchioness of, 261  
 Scarborough, Lord, 69  
 Schulemberg, Melusina. *See* Kendal, Duchess of  
 Scott, General, 234  
 Sifton, Lord, 301  
 Selwyn, Miss Albina, 170  
 —, George, 158, 234, 236, 238, 239, 241, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247  
 Serres, Mrs. Olivia, 119  
 Sheridan, R. B., 257, 258  
 —, Tom, 297-298  
 Somerset, Lord R., 263  
 Sonnsfeld, Fraulein, 44  
 Sophia, Electress of Hanover (grand-daughter of James I), 16, 27, 28, 29, 34  
 —, Queen of Prussia, 20, 26, 38, 41-44  
 —, Charlotte, Electress of Hanover, 16, 27  
  
 Sophia Dorothea of Zell, wife of George I, 20-27  
*Spectator*, 87-88  
 Spencer, Lady Diana, 58  
 —, Lord Edward, 241  
 —, Lord Robert, 241, 242, 244, 247  
 Stafford, Lord, 187  
 Stavordale, Lord, 234  
 "Stephan, Prince," 220-221  
 Strangways, Lady Susan, 150, 151, 152  
 Suffolk, Lady, 36  
  
 THANET, Lord, 248, 296  
 Thoms, Mr., 132-137  
 Thomson, James, 79, 80  
 Thrale, Mrs., 98, 99, 100  
 Thyane, Thomas, murder of, 21  
 Tierney, George, 161  
  
 URTON, General Sir Arthur, 286  
  
 VANE, Miss, 56  
 Victoria, Queen, 117, 128  
  
 WAGER, Sir Charles, 67  
 Wake, Archbishop, 52, 74  
 Waldegrave, Lord, 92, 93  
 Walmoden, Madame de, 61, 65, 67, 82, 149  
 Walpole, Horace, 12, 50, 51, 64, 77, 79, 83, 94, 146, 150, 151, 155, 169, 175, 182-183, 187, 189, 200, 211, 236, 237, 238  
 —, Sir Robert, 12, 18, 50, 52, 54, 56, 60, 69, 72, 78, 142, 147, 168, 197  
 Warwick, Earl of, 122, 129  
 Wattier's, 293, 295; foundation of the club, 296-297  
 Wedderburn, 142  
 Wellington, Duke of, 128, 309  
 Westmorland, Lord, 158  
 Westmouth, Lord, 69, 113  
 Whitebread, Alderman, and Beau Brummell, 291  
 White's, 142, 159, 237, 243, 293; foundation of the club, 295, 298, 314  
 Wilhelmina of Prussia, 38-39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 48  
 William IV and Beau Brummell, 312, 313-314  
 Willmot, Dr. James, 118, *et seq.*  
 Wilton, Lord, 262  
 Winchester, Bishop of, and Beau Brummell, 290  
 Wolfenbittel, Duke of, 24, 53  
 Worcester, Lord, 303  
 Wyatt, Sir Nathaniel, 97, 99, 100, 142  
 Wynn, Sir Watkin, 273  
  
 YARMOUTH, Lord, 273  
 York, Edward, Duke of, brother of George III, 93, 125, 126, 183  
 —, Frederick, Duke of, brother of George IV, 248, 267, 283, 286-287  
 —, Duchess of, her favours to Beau Brummell, 288-289, 303, 306, 309







**Bound by**

*Bharati.*

13, Patwaribagan Lane,

**Date...8.7.FEB.1950**

942/BOU



16440

